

BÁCS: A BALKAN-TURKISH TOWN IN HUNGARY

KLÁRA HEGYI*
(Budapest)

Bács, an Ottoman *nahiye* centre defended by a small garrison, was situated in the southernmost region of Hungary, the place of massive Serbian immigration. The town was left by its original Hungarian residents; its Muslim population, living in the two districts of the fortress and the four civil *mahalles*, is known from the years around 1570 and 1578. About one quarter of the inhabitants were peasants, one sixth of them were men of religion, mainly *cami* personnel and *sufis*. 58 persons in 12 crafts around 1570, and 110 individuals in 33 crafts in 1578 testify to the relative importance of industrial activities. 25 tradesmen were engaged in transporting grain to Buda from the south. The town was preferred to Szeged by many *sipahis* of the same *sancak* as their abode. Unlike several Hungarian urban settlements and Ottoman centres in the northern parts of the country, Bács resembled a typical Ottoman *kasaba*.

Key words: Settlers in the Balkans, Balkan-type town, military-administrative centre, soldiers, intelligentsia, craftsmen, merchants.

Ottoman studies in Hungary have important achievements, yet there are topics which have been neglected so far. Among other things, the Ottoman-Turkish military-administrative centres in Hungary and their micro-societies have to be examined. It was over half a century ago when Lajos Fekete produced the most thorough study possible by utilising all the available sources regarding the inhabitants of Buda (*Budun*, *Budin*) under Ottoman rule.¹ The Turks' capital in Hungary, however, was not at all a typical centre; no one would think of the smaller administrative centres being similar to Buda. By the same token, the high-standard Muslim intellectual life of Pécs and Szigetvár (*Peçuy* and *Sigetvar*)² cannot be applied generally to the whole territory of Ottoman Hungary.

It is the lack of sources rather than disinterest that account for the above-mentioned debt. The *tahrir defteris* surveyed only those sections of the population and

* Klára Hegyi, Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. H-1014 Budapest, Úri u. 53. Fax: 00-36-1-356-6373

¹ Fekete (1944).

² Ágoston (1993 and 1994).

production on which the treasury wanted to levy taxes; therefore, the exempted Muslim population of the Turkish centres fell outside it. This standard practice did not apply to the population of the southern part of Turkish-occupied Hungary where people from the Balkans settled down in the 16th century as in *sancak* of Sirem, between the rivers Száva and Dráva, in the *sancak* of Szeged (*Segedin*), in the southern part of the area between the rivers Tisza and Danube, and in the *vilayet* of Temesvár (*Temeşvar*), to the east from the river Tisza. Even in the above areas the practice of conducting surveys was not consistent. During the reign of Selim II, a *tahrir defteri*³ of the *sancak* of Sirem was compiled probably between 1568 and 1570. It is clear from this document that the Muslim population of the administrative centres sometimes was taken into account, sometimes the peasants cultivating the land, who paid taxes, were recorded in it, while in other instances it was the population exempt from taxes that was taken into consideration. It was very seldom that the entire or nearly the entire Muslim population was recorded in the *defter*. The same applied to the southern *sancaks* of the *vilayets* of Buda and Temesvár.

The little Ottoman centre, Bács (*Baç*, modern Bač in Yugoslavia) whose Muslim population I attempt to reconstruct, is situated in the southernmost area between the rivers Danube and Tisza; it is fairly close to the place where the Danube takes a sharp turn to the east. It was the seat of the archbishopric several times in the middle ages. Its castle was permanently captured by Süleyman I in 1529, probably on his way home from Vienna. He also left a Turkish garrison in it.⁴ In 1543 there were 103 Turkish infantry and artillery stationed there;⁵ the number of cavalry is unknown. In the first tax register of the *sancak* of Szeged prepared in 1546, Bács was referred to as a *nahiye* centre. It remained both a fortified castle and a *nahiye* centre until the end of Ottoman rule.

Four *tahrir defteris* of the *sancak* of Szeged survive from the 16th century.⁶ The population of Ottoman centres is in most cases underregistered. The first two surveys are useless from the point of view of Bács; however, the other two appear complete for our purposes.

The *defter* compiled between 1568 and 1570 divides the town of Bács into four districts (*mahalle*). These districts were inhabited mostly by Muslim population who were exempt from taxes; by the *ehl-i herras* or taxpayer peasants; by Gypsies (*kıptıyan*) grouped in three units and numbering 24 families; and by Christians (*gebran*) who comprised 27 heads of families and nine single men.⁷ The Christians were settlers from the Balkans; there were no Hungarians in the town by the time of the first survey in 1546. People inhabiting the two districts of the castle were left out,

³ McGowen (1983). Also, for establishing dates, see idem, 1969, p. 143.

⁴ An intelligence report prepared by a Christian in the spring of 1529 had no knowledge of Turkish soldiers in Bács. Laszovski (1914, pp. 150–153).

⁵ Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien (ÖNB) Mxt 550, pp. 68–70.

⁶ The material relating to the two southern *nahiyes*, in which Bács was also listed, can be found in the *defter* of ca. 1546. It was published by Djurdjev–Zirojević (1988). For the tax registers of 1560–1561, 1568–1570, and 1578–1579, see Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul (= BOA) Tapu 332, 554, and 570.

⁷ BOA Tapu 554, pp. 253–256.

which corroborates what was then the standard practice, i.e., there were mostly soldiers living within the castle walls in the Ottoman administrative centres. With the help of the *deFTER* of 1578, we will be able to shed some more light on them.

The four Muslim districts of the town were named after the mosques that, in turn, were named after their respective founders. One feels astounded by reading the names of these distinguished men. The mosque of the first district was founded by Mahmud pasha, who is impossible to identify. Whoever he might have been, his deed is not at all surprising, as it was a social obligation for a pasha to found a mosque. The founder of the second mosque called Keçeci Mehmed is a different type, since he was a local craftsman producing felt. He devoted his wealth to set up and maintain the mosque what is an even more difficult task. The mosque of the third district was named after the court of justice (*mahalle-i mescid-i mahkeme*) that was situated there. The census of 1578 referred to it as the old court of justice (*eski mahkeme*), which probably means that the building of the former Hungarian court was converted into a mosque. At last, the fourth district was named after “the mosque of the sword maker” (*mahalle-i mescid-i kılıçcı*), meaning that it was also founded by a local craftsman, whose name had been forgotten. Mosques were traditionally founded by the military and administrative elite, sometimes by middle-ranking officials. Craftsmen very seldom appear in the role of a founder. Therefore, whenever they do, their deed is a reflection of their local patriotism and wealth, even if we know that these mosques were very modest and without any ornament.

There were 220 Muslims in the four districts who were exempt from taxes together with 61 peasants who were liable to pay taxes. Thus, the total number of Muslim family heads amounted to 281. The number of soldiers within the castle walls was still unknown at that time; in 1578 they were 114 strong. Consequently, the number of the entire population must have well exceeded 1000 persons including other family members, even if there were single men among them what was not uncommon among soldiers. The first conclusion one can make is that there was a large Muslim population in Bács three decades after the Ottomans set foot in Hungary.

By the time of the tax registration, the distinctive image of the various districts of the town was in the making. The *mahalle* surrounding the mosque of Mahmud pasha was the most densely populated and the richest as far as the sorts of professions was concerned. The number of the servants of the faith was significant: a mosque staff, including Mürüvvet Hoca *imam*, Süleyman Hoca *müezzin*, and Mehmed the caretaker of the mosque (*kayim, kayyum*), a *seyh*, Ferhad *dede* and fifteen *sufis*. The state administration was represented by a scribe (*katib*) and an auctioneer (*dellal*). Civilians were represented by five merchants and 20 craftsmen. Fifty-two heads of families lived in the *mahalle* named after the mosque founded by Mehmed the felt-maker. This mosque also had a complete staff: Firuz Hoca *imam*, Ahmed Hoca *müezzin*, and Hüseyin caretaker. In addition, 16 *sufis* lived here. On the other hand, fewer civilians were registered here than in the previous district: three merchants and eleven craftsmen. The district around the old court of justice must have been identical with the old city centre where once the market place and the Christian court of justice stood. This district was inhabited by 52 families too. The mosque was fully staffed, Memi Hoca

imam, Hayreddin *müezzin*, and Üveys caretaker, while the group of *sufis* consisted of merely 6 persons. It is noteworthy that the largest number of merchants, nine in all, the market supervisor (*ser-i pazar*), and 12 craftsmen resided here. The last district named after the sword-maker, where 48 heads of families were listed, was the least typical. The mosque did not function, there were no *sufis*, and the “cream” of the population comprised only two merchants and a single craftsman.

When examining the various occupation-types, the large number of clergymen is the most striking. The 9 persons serving in the three functioning mosques, together with the *şeyh*, and the 37 *sufis* gives a total of 47 men. This means that one-sixth or 17 per cent of the 281 Muslim inhabitants engaged in religious and/or intellectual professions. The number of dervishes is strikingly high. To offer a comparison, during the same period Dimitrofçe (Szávaszentdemeter in Hungarian; modern Mitrovica in Yugoslavia) was the most densely populated, most significant and colourful centre in the *sancak* of Sirem. It comprised 11 districts and there were 565 Muslim heads of families.⁸ Its tax register, made in the same years as that of Szeged appears thorough. We encounter 13 people serving in the mosques and seven dervishes there (three *şeyhs* of the order and four *sufis*). They made up only 3.5 per cent of the Muslim heads of families. The census did not reveal anything further about the dervishes of Bács. We do not know which order they belonged to nor why they settled down there. Their surprisingly large number may have been attributed to the personal charm of the *şeyh*. Also, Bács is situated along the major busy road connecting Buda with the lower Danube region, where dervishes were needed to offer hospitality to travellers in accordance with their duty.

The secular part of the local intelligentsia is not fully recorded in the tax register being restricted to a scribe, an auctioneer, and a market supervisor. In addition, an interpreter (*tercüman*) was mentioned among the taxpaying peasants. The juridical body⁹ comprising a few people, persons in charge of matters concerning taxes and finances are also missing from the records; this is all the more surprising as the bustling market and business activities¹⁰ presumed the presence of one or two market officials beside the supervisor. The persons missing must not have been a significant number; the known and expected persons probably did not exceed 15 people. Including them, the religious and secular intelligentsia must have reached one-fifth of the population.

We find 46 craftsmen among the exempt group of the population and 12 within the peasants. It means that 21 per cent of the Muslim inhabitants were craftsmen. At the same time, over one-third of the Christians, being equal with ten heads of families, were craftsmen. Most people, 31 persons of the Muslims, were involved in producing or manufacturing fabrics. The largest group among them was that of the taylor (*hayyat*) with 15 non-taxpaying and 5 peasant individuals, these latter thus

⁸ McGowen (1983, pp. 261–280).

⁹ There are hardly any data referring to the *kadis* in Bács. However, we know of one Turkish judge in 1578 called Abdülkerim Mehmed. Velics – Kammerer (1890, p. 529).

¹⁰ The market and fair fee amounting to 6550 *akçe* was the highest tax item among the town's revenues.

occupying themselves with industry as a second job. Further, there was one taylor among the Christians. Although the largest number of people worked in this profession in other places as well, their number in Bács seems to indicate that they produced for other markets, too. The rest, altogether ten persons made footwear – boots and slippers. (Eight of them *çizmeci*, one *papuçcu*, and one *başmakçı*.) If my reading and interpretation of the word is correct, one craftsman (*pusti*) made and manufactured leather and fir.

Eight persons earned their livings as carpenters (*neccar*) in the town, out of which five enjoyed tax exemption and three were peasants. Their work was very much in demand among the Muslim population in Hungary, as they built their houses from timber and mud.¹¹ Although it was not indicated whether or not they worked upon sultanic appointment (*neccar ba berat*) and craftsmen working for regular payment were not included on the soldiers' payroll compiled around 1570¹² either, it is likely that the carpenters working in the town also did the necessary work in the castle and the port. (Back in 1543 caulkers, *kalafatçı*, also served in the garrison,¹³ however, by 1570 they had disappeared. But then they had to be replaced.)

Seven craftsmen represented metallurgy. Four blacksmiths (*haddad*), one of them a part-time peasant, one farrier (*nalbend*), and a sword maker (*kılıççı*) made up the small team. Two saddlers (*serracı*) partly catered for the soldiers' needs. As far as food production was concerned, this branch secured a living for five butchers (*kasab*). The number of spinners of goat hair (*muytab*, *mutaf*) is rather remarkable: there were three persons among the non-taxpaying craftsmen, two among the peasants, and further three persons among the Christian population. In addition, two wheel-makers among the Christians were mentioned; this craft was not represented among the Muslims.

Summing up all the professions enumerated so far we come to 12 different crafts in the town. This number was not large at all considering the fact that the Muslim community had inhabited Bács for three–four decades by then. The small number of professions compared to the large number of craftsmen may indicate that the cloth and footwear producers sold their surplus goods with the help of merchants.

The scribe put down the names of 20 Muslim merchants in his list. Further, at the end of the list five Christian merchants are recorded as well, who paid the poll-tax (*cizye*) but did not pay the land-tax (*ispençe*). One of these was a rag-and-bone man (*eskici*), the remaining 19 persons were real merchants (*tacir*). This significantly high number seems to corroborate what we already know about the prominent role that both banks of the Lower-Danube region played in supplying the garrisons of Buda and Pest (*Peşte*) and the neighbouring fortresses.

The customs registers¹⁴ of Buda in the 1570s were unfortunately just as inconsistent in indicating the merchants' domicile as the *tahrir defteris* were in enumerat-

¹¹ The majority of the houses built by the Turks in Vác were made with the same method. Fekete 1942.

¹² BOA Tapu 551, pp. 123–133.

¹³ ÖNB Mxt 550, p. 70.

¹⁴ Fekete–Káldy-Nagy (1962, pp. 53–169, 214–319).

ing the Muslim population. Since the multitude of goods taken to Buda from the south was so significant, the small number of reliable data at our disposal is still very revealing. The domicile of the merchant who acted as the transporter was registered most frequently when the goods on the ships were cleared. Out of the 767 ships cleared at Buda during the period of 28 lunar months, between 26 February 1571 and 20 June 1572, and between 4 February 1573 and 23 January 1574, the domicile of the captains or owners of 314 ships were registered. The 48 merchants from Buda and Pest and two from Székesfehérvár (*Istolni Belgrad*) were many times outnumbered by those 264 merchants who came from the *sancaks* of Sirem (Szerém) and Szeged respectively to Buda. Their shipment included above all wheat, barley, and a small amount of rice. The space remaining was filled with fats, cheese, dried fruits, chestnut, honey, walnuts, peanuts, pickles. It is interesting to note that only 15 ships coming from the south did not bring cereals. The great majority of the transporters shipped wheat and barley from the Syrmium (74 merchants from Belgrade, 54 from Semendire/Szendró/Smederovo, 31 from Varadin/Pétervárad/Petrovaradin, and 30 from Ószek/Eszék/Osijek – all in modern Yugoslavia) and in all probability from Wallachia to Buda. Those 47 grain merchants who lived in the southernmost part of the *sancak* of Szeged fell behind the former. The merchants of Bács on the other hand who registered 23 ships with the customs authorities of Buda, ranked fifth within the whole sample.¹⁵

It is clear from the customs register that the merchants of Bács supplied the army, often by way of state commission. The two leading merchants on the market were Evliya and Bayramlu *emins* from Bács. They carried 22 shiploads of wheat and barley to Buda by indicating their place of domicile, and a further five shiploads of wheat without any indications. In addition to them, there was another merchant from Bács called Rızvan who succeeded in becoming involved in this lucrative business. Whereas Rızvan was made pay duty on his goods, they levied duty only on the contents of six ships owned by the two *emins*. The remaining 21 ships in their possession enjoyed customs exemption, as they were carrying goods on state order. Thus Evliya and Bayramlu traded in a dual capacity: as commissioned *emins*, they collected the tithe in the vicinity of Bács and took the grain to Buda; as ordinary merchants, they bought more grain and sold it. This second capacity becomes clear in the case of Bayramlu. We find him among the Muslims of Bács registered as merchant, *tacir*.

Regrettably, it is impossible to track down the other merchants from Bács in the customs registers of Buda because merchants were registered the same way both in the tax and customs registers, i.e., their first name and the word merchant. As a result, it would be rather careless to identify Mehmed who cleared his goods in Buda with Mehmed who was a merchant in Bács. Even the suspicious cases cannot be ascertained. For example, there were two Behram *tacirs* in Bács and there were also two Behram *tacirs* who regularly cleared his respective consignment in Buda. It is probable but not certain that they were the same people.

¹⁵ Fekete – Káldy-Nagy (1962, p. 716). Lajos Fekete compiled a summary of the ships carrying grain that were cleared by customs and their respective captains. There are some minor differences in his figures due to the fact that he took into account data from 1571 and 1573 only.

The economic boom had an impact on the increase of the number of merchants in Bács. It is likely that the comparatively large number of tailors and shoemakers sold their goods with the help of these merchants.

The 46 craftsmen and 20 merchants made up nearly one fourth, namely 23.5 per cent of the Muslim population in the town. If we take into account those peasants who worked as part-time craftsmen, then the figure increases to 28 per cent. The ratio of the intelligentsia was at about 20 per cent and let us add the ratio of the peasants, 22 per cent, to this! The remaining part belonged to the garrison or were *sipahis*. This time there were only three garrison soldiers (who in the meantime had received salary *timars* and whose names are known from a contemporaneous list¹⁶), the rest probably had an abode in the castle. In addition, seven cavalry men (*beşlü*) and 15 landowner *sipahis*¹⁷ were registered as inhabitants of the town, making up 8 per cent of the Muslim population. There was no occupation whatever written under the names of exactly one quarter of the population. It is likely that they were former garrison members waiting for a vacancy. There were plenty of such soldiers in every Ottoman administrative centre.

This composition of the Muslim population of Bács around 1570 can be compared with data recorded in the next cadastral survey compiled in 1578.¹⁸ At this time the inhabitants of the two districts of the castle were also listed. Altogether there were 411 Muslim and 15 Christian heads of families in Bács with a total population amounting to about 2000 persons. All Muslims were exempt and no peasants figured among them. It was not because they were left out, what becomes clear if we know that land tax (*resm-i çift*) is missing altogether from the list of their liabilities. It is conspicuous that only 216 persons out of the 411 are mentioned with an occupation. Thus, it is not known what the other half of the population did for a living. As compared to the previous register in 1570 when only one quarter of the inhabitants was enumerated without a craft practiced, there were two new, probably interrelated phenomena: disappearance of the peasants and the sudden increase of those without a specified occupation. Although both *defters* portray Bács as a Balkan-type town, *kasaba*, in the period between their compilation a change may have occurred in the inhabitants' legal status. Everybody, regardless of his respective occupation was exempt from paying state taxes; as we will see below, Dimitrofçe had earlier been granted this privilege. This could explain the disappearance of 61 peasant heads of families who had been liable to pay the land tax and whose social position was thus elevated.

In 1578, we see two big *camis* in the castle; the two districts were named after them (*mahalle-i cami-i şerif* and *mahalle-i Ali beg*). The first *mahalle* was almost exclusively inhabited by soldiers and the mosque staff. This is where the houses of Mehmed, the castle's captain (*dizdar*), his two deputies (*kethüda*), and many other garrison soldiers, whose rank was not systematically listed, stood. Some of the latter

¹⁶ BOA Tapu 551, pp. 123–133.

¹⁷ They were defined as *el-cüندی* in the register. Fodor (1997, p. 323, note 58), having compared the *tahrir* and *timar defteris*, concluded that 'the Ottoman scribes used *cüندی* meaning "cavalrymen" as a synonym for the landed *sipahi*'.

¹⁸ BOA Tapu 570, pp. 60–62.

could be found on the list of garrison forces completed ten years earlier. Unfortunately, we could not find a contemporary list of guards which renders a direct comparison impossible. *Sipahis* (*zaim* and *cüندی*) did not live in this part of the castle. The staff of the more prominent *cami* of the two called *cami-i şerif* consisted of Abdüselam *hatib* and Mustafa *müezzin*. One blacksmith (*haddad*) and two carpenters represented the craftsmen who are normally primarily employed in a fortress. The other district of the castle showed a more varied picture. The religious and intellectual elite was not only represented by the staff of the mosque (Mehmed Çelebi *hatib*, Emir Efendi *imam* and two *müezzins* by the name of Cafer Halife and Piri), but a scholar (*muarrif*) called Mustafa and four dervishes. Eight *sipahis* had a house each in this district, out of whom two were *zeamet* and six *timar*-holders. In addition, we find one Muslim interpreter, one auctioneer, five merchants, and 23 different craftsmen on the list.

The four districts of the town had the same names as ten years earlier. All mosques had a complete staff; even the sword maker's mosque was in use. By this time, the district named after the old court of justice became the most densely populated giving shelter to 104 heads of families. It also remained the commercial and manufacturing centre of the town with 14 merchants and 30 craftsmen. It was probably the bustle of this district that attracted the sole beggar of the *kasaba*. The district named after the sword maker became livelier than a decade before: five *sipahis*, three merchants, and 13 craftsmen lived here.

Although the scribe listed the occupation of only about half the town's inhabitants, as compared to the figures ten years before, there was a significant increase in the number of merchants and craftsmen; Bács now had a more middle-class character: there were 110 craftsmen (111 including the beggar) and 25 merchants who made up exactly one-third of all the people listed. The inhabitants pursued 33 different types of crafts as opposed to 12 ten years before.¹⁹ At the top of the list was cloth manufacturing again, employing 64 craftsmen. Out of these, 32 tailors (*hayyat* and *terzi*), 20 bootmakers, three tanners (*debbag*, *tabak*), two furriers (*kürkçü*²⁰), two skullcap makers (*kavukçu*), one woolcarder (*hallac*), one felt maker (*abacı*), one textile dyer (*boyacı*), one fuller, and a silk merchant (*kazzaz*) were active in Bács. The tailors and bootmakers, who amounted to 13 per cent of the total population, also worked for markets. All other crafts were less significant as they only catered for local needs. The second in rank was metallurgy. There were six blacksmiths (four *ahenger*, one *haddad*, and one *demirci* respectively), one farrier, four wood/metal turners (*çıkırkçı*), three sword makers (*seyyaf*), one locksmith (*çilingir*), one knife maker (*bıçakçı*), and one cauldron maker (*kazgani*). As far as building construction was concerned, nine carpenters (seven *neccar* and two *dülger*) could be identified. Then six persons were engaged in preparing and selling food and drinks; in more details, there was one of

¹⁹ This is the total number of occupations registered. Some of them survive today as synonyms, for example, both *hayyat* and *terzi* mean tailor, or *neccar* and *dülger* carpenter. Their varied use seems to indicate that they had slightly different meanings back then.

²⁰ If read as *kürekçi*, the word means oarsman or maker of oars. Because of the different frequency of the two occupations, I preferred the above identification.

each: a butcher, a cook (*aşçı*), a honey seller (*balcı*), a *helva* maker (*helvacı*), a grocer (*bakkal*), and a salt seller (*tuzcu*). Again, the profession of two saddlers and, as a novelty, two potters (*çölmekçi*), was specified, followed by a boatman (*gemici*), a perfumier (*attar*), and eight barbers (*berber*). The personnel of baths are missing from this list. Maybe, for simplicity's sake, they were listed as barbers hence their large number.

The number of merchants amounted to 25. It appears that the rag-and-bone men were comfortably off, as four of them could afford to live there. The number of real merchants increased from 19 to 21 despite the fact that by the end of the 1570s the volume of grain trade to Buda became insignificant. The ships were mainly loaded with various artifacts; most of the ship owners were now Hungarian or southern-Slav Christians. Nevertheless a significant number of merchants were able to make ends meet by carrying assorted goods – among them, supposedly, the products of tailors and bootmakers of Bács – from the south to the north.

Beside the craftsmen and merchants, the number of soldiers increased, especially that of the timariots. The fact that the *sipahis* of the *sancak* of Szeged settled in Bács further enhances the town's reputation. In 1578, 29 timariots lived here, being seven per cent of the people registered. Out of them, there were 24 *timar*-holders (*cüندی*), three *zaims*, and the commanders of the *sipahis*, the *miralay* and the *serasker*. The last five persons were dignitaries who should have normally lived in the *sancak*'s seat, Szeged. Around 1570 eight *zeamet* and 62 *timar* holdings were distributed in the *sancak* of Szeged.²¹ There must not have been more prebends in 1578 either. The fact that out of approximately 70 landowners, five high-ranking persons and 24 *sipahis* chose to live in Bács instead of Szeged seems to testify to the significance of the town.

Since the last register, only one segment of Bács' society suffered a loss: the servants of the faith. There were altogether 18 people working in the two big and four small mosques. (As a matter of fact, we can assume that 20 people were active in the mosques because they did not register an *imam* and a caretaker at the big *cami*.) As we could see, there was even a scholar in the city, and a *hoca*, who probably taught at the school. In the district named after the old court of justice, there lived a trustee of the endowment (*mütevelli*), who administered the pious foundation with the help of which the mosque was maintained. So far so good. The decimation affected the dervishes. The leader of the order was now a different person called Şaban *dede*. Only 11 *sufis* remained of the 37 recorded ten years earlier. The reason for this remains shrouded in mystery. The ratio of people in religious service was still at 8 per cent.

Similarly to 1570, only a fraction of the administration was listed in the 1578 tax register: two scribes, the auctioneer, and the interpreter. The total number of officials can be, again, estimated at 15 persons. Therefore, the ratio of the clergymen and the intelligentsia amounted to about 11 per cent of the population.

²¹ BOA Tapu 551, pp. 1–122.

By comparing the two lists compiled with an interval of approximately 10 years, another interesting and mysterious fact surfaces: there are very few people who appeared in both surveys. Out of the 19 merchants in 1570 and the 21 merchants in 1578, only four were mentioned in both. Or, out of the 15 and 32 tailors respectively only four were the same, or out of the 10 and 20 bootmakers, only one appeared on both lists. It has always been clear that the *kadıs* and the people in religious service and the *sipahis* and garrison soldiers served on the rotary basis, sometimes the reason being obvious, sometimes obscure. But it is most surprising that the craftsmen and merchants behaved along the same lines even if their business was prospering. As we could see, the number of tailors and bootmakers doubled and that of the merchants rose, but they still left the city and new people occupied their places.

Perhaps it would be easier to understand and assess Bács resembling the Balkan-type of *kasaba* settlement if we compare it to a real Turkish town in the Balkans. The most suitable place would be the most developed and densely populated *nahiye*-centre of the *sancak* of Sirem, Dimitrofçe.²² The Ottoman tax registers were seldom emotional; their task was to state facts. However, in the case of Dimitrofçe, the scribe devoted an entire passage to the praise of the town, reasoning its tax exempt status.²³ "It is a big and flourishing *kasaba* where three noble *camıs* were built. It continuously grows and develops. In the happy days of the *padishah*, it became good and suitable to become a *şehir*. Because in the old sultanic *defter*, they did not levy farm tax (*resm-i çift*) on its Muslims, in the new register they were not imposed upon any either. The [inhabitants] of the city busy themselves in collecting the crossing fee, due to the treasury from disobedient and defiant vagrants (*levend*) and others. Also, in times of flood and heaving billows, they take care of the ships in the port so that they remain unharmed. To compensate them for their relentless help and co-operation in treasury matters, it was registered in the new sultanic *defter* that they are liable to pay tithe only after the crops grown on the lands of [outer] prebend-holders (*sahib-i arz*). Otherwise, in accordance with the old custom, they will be exempt from the land tax, regular and extraordinary state taxes (*avarız-i divaniye ve tekalif-i örfiye*), and other services."

Dimitrofçe took advantage of Belgrade's vicinity, the latter being the last assembly and inspection place for the armies heading to the north. This was the place to where the flock of merchants and craftsmen followed the regular forces upon the orders of the sultan and waited until the armies returned.²⁴ This made Belgrade the storehouse of surplus goods from the northern Balkans from the first half of the 16th century. The Ottomans captured Dimitrofçe in 1521, then demolished its fortress.²⁵ In 1663 Henrik Ottendorf only saw a small thatched-walled *palanka* fort on the western outskirts of the town.²⁶ Nothing seems to indicate the existence of a castle or a garrison here at the time of the survey in 1570. It was only a town on the banks of the

²² McGowen (1983, pp. 261–280).

²³ *Op. cit.* p. 276.

²⁴ Samardžić (1970).

²⁵ Zirojević (1976, p. 116).

²⁶ Hermann (1943, p. 65).

Száva river, in the vicinity of Belgrade. It was the merchants' and craftsmen's town; at its old market place, near the mosque dedicated to Bayezid *beg*, there were weekly markets and three times a year fairs.²⁷

In the eleven districts of the town, which grew around the three big and one small mosques, there lived altogether 565 Muslim heads of families exempt from taxes and 29 Christian heads. The latter also enjoyed some kind of a privileged status, as their liabilities were not included among the tax items. Thus, the entire population must have numbered at least 3000 persons. The name list specifies the occupation of 344 people, that is 61 per cent of the Muslim population. One hundred years later Ottendorf concluded that the people owed their comfortable lives to the propitious natural environment and agriculture. "The great majority of the population is Turkish and rather wealthy, as they make their living from cultivation, animal husbandry, and vegetable gardens. Because the Száva is rich in fish, they have a wholesome staple." However, in the period examined, Dimitrofçe was a centre of craftsmanship and trade; the ratio of those living from agriculture could not be higher than 40%, namely those people whose occupation was not indicated in the *defter*. The town's intelligentsia – viz. the mosque staff, dervishes, teachers, a scholar, six scribes, a *kadı*, two court officials, the district dignitaries, tax collectors, auctioneers, etc. – amounted to 8.5 per cent of the people registered. The ratio of the military and landowner *sipahis* was the same. Forty-four per cent of the inhabitants of Dimitrofçe were craftsmen and merchants. In 47 occupations, there were altogether 189 craftsmen, being equal with 33.5 per cent of adult males living in the city. The largest group was that of cloth makers and leather manufacturers. Out of the 77 persons, 39 were tailors and 25 shoemakers. We also find a qualified architect (*mimar*), 14 carpenters and nine adobe brick makers (*kerpiççi*). Twenty-one craftsmen engaged in making metal objects and food-processing respectively. Ten people worked as baths attendants, barbers, soap and comb makers, and doctors. The rest earned their living in haulage and transportation; they were camel and mule drivers, dock workers, boatmen, oarsmen, coachmen, etc. Some worked in branches with smaller demands such as bookbinders, mat-weavers, manufactured measures, or horse-hair blankets, etc. There were 13 wage earners (*ırgad*) assisting the qualified independent craftsmen. The number of official merchants was 58, their proportion to the total population was ten per cent.

We can also compare Bács to another type of Turkish centres: the military *sancak* seats packed with soldiers. These are Lippa (*Lipova*, modern Lipova in Romania) and Gyula (*G'ula*) in the *vilayet* of Temesvár. We know Lippa's Muslim population from 1567 and 1579.²⁸ In 1567, fifteen years after the Ottoman occupation, there were 319 Muslim heads of families exempt from taxes living in the castle or the town. We know the occupation of 246 persons. The ratio of garrison soldiers amounted to 41 per cent and the landed *sipahis* to 14 per cent of the entire Muslim population. Thus, the ruling military element was at 55 per cent. Persons working in the mosques and administration were scantily registered. Only a fraction of the po-

²⁷ McGowen (1983, p. 278).

²⁸ Fodor (1997, pp. 322–325, 327–332).

tential number of people working at the four mosques surfaced. As regards the staff of the *sancak* administration, we only know of one scribe, one *emin*, and two market criers. Thus the two intellectual layers of society amounted to five per cent. The actual number could not have exceeded 15 per cent. In addition to the soldiers, there were 50 craftsmen and five merchants, whom together amounted to 17 per cent of the Muslim population. By 1579 the ratios did not change significantly. At this time, 384 names were registered, out of which 296 had an occupation written next to his name. The military element was at 51 per cent, the intelligentsia was at 9 per cent, and the craftsmen and merchants were at 16 per cent. The number of craftsmen increased by 10 persons in the past 12 years; at the same time, only one merchant was registered. The number of crafts increased from 19 to 27. The register dating from 1579 enlisting the population of the other *sancak* centre, showed an even larger military official layer. In Gyula²⁹ captured in 1566, there were six districts around the mosques. Of the 402 Muslims registered, 60 per cent was military, 5.5 per cent was religious and administrative officials, the latter being scantily registered. In addition, there were 27 craftsmen and only one merchant, amounting to 7 per cent of the Muslim population.

It is not difficult to decide in which category of Turkish towns Bács belonged. It is clear that Bács bore resemblance to the Dimitrofçe-type of places that became populous and civilised not by being the local bastions of central state power, but because of their favourable geographical position, the growing religious, manufacturer, and merchant layers of society made them the intellectual and economic centres of smaller or bigger areas.

Bács lay in a region where there were a number of similar centres at an arm's length. These include Titel, Zombor (*Sonbor*, modern Sombor), Szabadka (*Sobotka*, modern Subotica, all three in Yugoslavia), Baja, Kalocsa (*Kalaça*), and the *sancak* seat Szeged. Except for Szeged, all had equal opportunities at the beginning. All were *nahiye* centres with a small administrative apparatus, few soldiers. It was a possibility for all not to become garrison towns but economic and civil centres. It is regrettable that the registries of the other *nahiye* centres listed above are rather scanty thus can only be used with reservation. All things considered, it appears that Bács achieved the most. It did not reach the advanced stage of Dimitrofçe, but it fell behind only by a nose. Its intellectual life surpassed that of Dimitrofçe. It became a real Balkan-Turkish town in the southernmost part of an area occupied by the Turks; an area where temporarily standards of the Balkans prevailed.

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²⁹ Káldy-Nagy (1982, pp. 47–51).

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