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THE CROATIAN RURAL HOUSEHOLDS AND OTTOMAN  
FISCAL UNITS<sup>1</sup>

*To the memory of Fehim Dž. Spaho*

Here I would like to discuss the "how-much-per-hane" question from the comparative angle, i. e. through comparison of Ottoman and non-Ottoman sources for some Croatian regions, with the final aim of trying to extend the acquired insights to the wider space of Ottoman Balkans in the 17th century. I also hope that this investigation could contribute to the debate on the *cizye defterleri* and how to use them. By doing this we could offer additional explanations to the phenomenon of the decrease in numbers of *cizye*-payers in the 17th c. as compared with the figures we have in the 16th century records.

Most of the important aspects of the *cizye-hane* subject have been approached in the recent times, notably in the writings of Mc Gowan (1981) and Kiel (1990). Of course, there are earlier studies still indispensable, like the articles of Káldy-Nagy.<sup>2</sup> Owing to these and other authors, our actual level of comprehension allows us to make following statements:

1. The 17th century Ottoman Europe seems to witness a sharp decline in population. After 1700 a recovery has begun;

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<sup>1</sup> This text was read as a participant's paper at the 11th Symposium of the CIEPO in Amsterdam, 21-25. 6. 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce McGowan, *Economic life in Ottoman Europe: taxation, trade and the struggle for land, 1600-1800*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge - Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris 1981, 226 p. Machiel Kiel, "Remarks on the administration of the poll tax (*cizye*) in the Ottoman Balkans and value of poll tax registers (*cizye defterleri*) for demographic research", *Etudes Balkaniques*, no 4, 1990, p. 70-104. Gyula Káldy-Nagy, "Bevölkerungstatistischer Quellenwert der *Ġizye-Defter* und der *Tahrir-Defter*", *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* XI, Budapest 1960, p. 259-69.

2. This was reflected in the *cizye defterleri* and other records of the Finance department, where substantial drop of household figures is to be found, if compared with other contemporary material or with the 16th century records;

3. There has been an overall decline of population, but not a real "catastrophy". The apparent "deficiency" is deceitful, at least up to some degree, which is due to pure administrative manoeuvring or to the changes in status (new vakif villages and the like). Islamization as a decisive factor is excluded. So the only factor that could be immediately agreed upon can be found in general tendencies in the 17th century Europe ("retreat after expansion", climatic changes, diseases etc.). These must obviously be the primary causes with widest importance, while the role of administrative arrangements, vakif expansion etc. remains in a way secondary.

I intend to leave more room here to the "secondary" factor of administrative reshaping of records. Thinking that much has depended on the ability of the *cizyedar* to adapt the demand for the specific sum of money to the local conditions is correct, but let us ask *why* exactly a particular amount was imposed in a particular kaza, with the assumption that overtaxation and conflicts were not desirable consequences? And secondly, do we know anything at all concerning the arrangements on the spot between the collectors and the people of this or that village?

It seems that some possible explanations could be indicated for the sancaks Požega, Cernik and Srijem. The whole area belonged in the 17th c. more or less to the "North-west zone" analyzed by McGowan for the period after 1700.<sup>3</sup> Here too we notice a sharp decline in *cizye-hanes* when we compare the 17th century figures with the data from both *tapu* and *cizye defterleri* from the seventies-eighties of the 16th c. (which are in good accord with one another with reference to *hane* numbers). In less than a century the "losses" were -32.8% for Požega, -47.4% for Srijem and -57.1% for Cernik.<sup>4</sup> This looks like a catastrophe - a really big one. But fortunately there is a rich non-Ottoman comparative material from various sources.

The most important contemporary source is a report made by a Venetian spy in 1626 for the whole of the Bosnian eyalet, with a statement that the data on houses and adult men derive from official Ottoman records for the province. For Cernik the number of houses of on-Muslim and non-Vlach villagers that can be guessed at, after having left enough room for tax-exemptions on the basis of militia-like services, was at least not lower than it was in 1586, i.e. ca 1200. For Požega the number will be some 7000, and for Srijem probably 9500 (the last figure is derived from a canonical visitation

<sup>3</sup> McGowan (1981), pp 90-91.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. TT 672, MXT 584 (this one in Vienna), TT 571, TT 612 and MXT 604. The 17th century *cizye defterleri* which I could study are: KK 3804 and 3803, MXT 611, (Vienna), AE 1/2-a 414, MMD 5459, 3289 and 4553. Except the MXT signatures, all other source material is to be found in the Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul.

made in 1623/24).<sup>5</sup> So the figures for the 17th century do not differ substantially from the situation around 1580. It is possible to suppose that even a slight increase has taken place in some regions. What was then the reason for leaving more than 40% of the region's Christian population out of the records?

Of the more than 7000 "missing hanes" one portion can surely be ascribed to the growing role of local militias. In the first half of the 17th century western Slavonia was constantly troubled by large bands of "social bandits" and the only chance for maintaining order consisted in engaging many peasants in militias against some degree of tax-exemption. But that was certainly a measure which could not bring the taxation system into ruin. So after we subtract some quantity - maybe some hundreds, maybe a thousand hanes - there still remains a considerable number to be discussed upon, but using other sources than the *cizye defterleri*, mainly non-Ottoman records. These are: two censuses made by the Habsburg Hofkammer in 1698. and 1702. and a church report for western Slavonia from 1760.<sup>6</sup> In the Hofkammer surveys the peasants were usually asked whether they have been paying the *cizye*, and if so, how much and on what basis. Some have said that they did not pay anything because of the service to the state, some answered that they were paying *maqtū*, but the large majority stated that they were paying annually a certain sum. The amount itself was coming from 0.8 to 10 florins. It was admittedly levied "domatim", but such a "household" was neither a nuclear family, nor an enlarged one, a Vlach *zadruga*, nor a family at all, but a *ground unit*, equaling a *çift* or *baştine* of various size, often of "normal" size called "sessio integra" (tamām çift), or "aratum" (pulluk). Whether the poll-tax was levied in a way described above only in such cases, i.e. 383 akçe per 24 acres or so, is still debatable, but it is easy to imagine that if the *baştine* was smaller (or of lesser value), the amount too was smaller, and vice-versa, while only the name of the *baştine*-holder entered the *mufassal* version of the *cizye* survey.<sup>7</sup> Likewise a breaking even of "excesses" and "losses" must have taken place, so that finally only the

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<sup>5</sup> Franjo Rački, "Prilozi za geografsko-statistički opis bosanskoga pašalika", Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, *Starine* XIV, Zagreb 1882, pp 173-195. The report of Georgiceo (Georgijević, Đurđević), from the same year, is occasionally also quoted, but this text repeats the same data. See also Krunoslav Draganović, "Izvešće apostolskog vizitatora Petra Masarechija o prilikama katol.naroda u Bugarskoj, Srbiji, Grijemu, Slavoniji i Bosni g. 1623. i 1624.", *Starine* XXXIX, Zagreb 1938, pp 1-48.

<sup>6</sup> Ive Mažuran, "Popis naselja i stanovništva u Slavoniji 1698. godine", *Radovi Zavoda za znanstveni rad JAZU u Osijeku* 2, Osijek 1988, 574 p. Tadija Smičiklas, *Dvjestogodišnjica oslobođenja Slavonije*, Zagreb 1891, II, 364 p. Stjepan Krivošić, *Izvori za historijsku demografiju - djelomični brojevi i poimenični popisi stanovništva*, Arhivski vjesnik, 36(1993), Zagreb 1993, pp 159-170.

<sup>7</sup> From the above-quoted source material, the heads of the hanes are mentioned by their names in KK 3804 and 3803 (kazas of Požega and Osijek).

"average" or imaginary *baştines* playing the role of *cizye-hanes* of 383 *akçe* appeared. In fact, many statements in the Hofkammer surveys are pointing precisely in that direction.<sup>8</sup>

How many persons lived on such a *baştine*? Around 1580 very probably every adult male was enrolled, including the "veled-i mezbür/birâder-i mezbür" and maybe landless persons too. For Požega that was clearly marked. Altogether 17700 *hanes* entered the surveys for the three *sancaks*. Hundred years later it was only 10344. Let us try now to subtract the *veled-*, *birâder-* and *bennâk* surplus. If we look for "filii uxorati" or "fratres uxorati" and "inquilini" in the Hofkammer records, we shall often meet more than one family on a *baştine*, but usually less than two. Then we can examine the data from the church survey from 1760 for Slavonia belonging to the Zagreb bishopric. There we see that "confession-hane" consisted of 7.62 souls or 1.54 families with 4.94 persons per family. Here I can hardly forget the amendment to the *kânün-nâme* of Srijem from 1578, which says that in Srijem "bir evde yedişer ve sekizer nefer kimesne olurlar".<sup>9</sup> It seems that we are now allowed to reduce the late 16th century figures by *one third*, leaving the remaining 1500 *hanes* to other explanations (militias, *mağtû'*, migration to the towns etc.).

We do not know whether this kind of interpretation is suitable for other regions or not. In any case I would like to suggest that this device be kept in reserve, especially if e.g. reliable sources other than *cizye defterleri* can furnish a picture of numerical stagnation, if not of an increase, contrary to the comparison of last 16th century *tahrirs* with *cizye* figures from the next century.

A special kind of risk is involved in cases when one does not possess the insight into series of *cizye defterleri* that covers equally *all* regions of an unit one wants to describe. Such is the case of the Bosnian *eyalet* as a whole. So McGowan has stated an almost spectacular "recovery" for Bosnia and Serbia in the 18th century, starting from the very low figures in 1700,<sup>10</sup> which in turn suggest that a terrible decline occurred in the 17th c. But - leaving Serbia aside - we can say that the only important decline in Bosnia was caused by war in the years 1683-97. The pre-war figures were some 73000 *hanes*, what is confirmed by the remark of Evliya Çelebi (who was

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mažuranić (1988): "Sessiones sub dominio turcico integrae eran 2, domus autem inhabitatae erant 6 (...) turcici imperatoris annuale tributum a singula sessione 3 fl. erant" (p. 394). "Domunculas habent (...) 11, sessiones populosas 2 1/2 (...) imperatori turcico plane Canisam de contributione haracs dictus 6 fl. et unam killam avenae" (p. 170). Smičiklas (1891): "sessiones 4 (...) sub dominio turcico decern domus (...) turcarum imperatori haraz Kanisam ab uno aratro quorum 4 erant 8 fl annuatim" (p. 95) etc.

<sup>9</sup> Ömer Lütfi Barkan, *XV ve XVIncı asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda zirai ekonominin hukuki ve mali esasları*. I.Kanunlar, İstanbul 1943, p. 307.

<sup>10</sup> McGowan, (1981), p. 96.

shown the records kept in the province), then by the already mentioned Venetian spy report and finally by the *cizye-hane* data for some Bosnian *kazas*.<sup>11</sup> This level was reached in ca 1753, and only after that date we can speak of an increase in relation to the 17th century. So the real growth was quite impressive (+41% from 1753 till 1815) but so tremendously disproportionate if we take the figures from 1700 as the end of a century-long process of decline (+208% or more!). Moreover, it seems that, similarly to Srijem and Slavonia, in Bosnia too the supposed 16th century growth (if any growth existed at all!) continued till ca 1620, despite the war 1593-1606. The maximum was reached apparently by that time, then the "17th century stagnation" followed. But not a decline or even a catastrophe.

To summarize: 1. It is worth the trouble to study as closely as possible the *hane - çift relation*, which may in some cases be very helpful in explaining the *cizye hane* figures and other tiresome problems of similar kind; 2. For the completeness' sake, *reports and comprehensive estimations of missionaries and clergymen* in general have to be studied, including archival work in Rome. They deserve much more attention.

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### S u m m a r y

The comparative material concerning Ottoman taxation in Croatian lands is very rich in data on the "hane" problem. This is due to the circumstance that Croatia consists of two different areas, the Mediterranean-Balcanic and the Danubian one with different patterns of settlement and family organization, as well to the fact that valuable non-Ottoman sources are at hand, i.e. the Habsburg and Venetian surveys and other documents dealing with the taxation of Ottoman subjects when references of that kind were needed. One can go even farther away from the Ottoman period, in the "archaeological" pursuit of the remnants of the taxation system which was in use before ca. 1690 (in Slavonia till ca. 1750, in Dalmatia till ca. 1800). Only by combining Ottoman and non-Ottoman material one can arrive to the point where at least general trends are discernible and reliable estimations can be made, however crude they might appear.

So it seems that the most important question be that of the *hane - baştine* (or *çift*) relation. Often the meaning of both terms was the same, but

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<sup>11</sup> For some Bosnian *kazas* there is enough information in Hamid Hadžibegić, *Glavarina u osmanskoj državi*, Sarajevo 1966. For others, e.g. Izvornik, data are available in the *cizye icamlı* for Kaniza (I came across some of them in the *Maliyeden Müdevver*).

in many cases it was not. *Baštine* was a designation for the holding in *raya*'s hands of any size, just as a *hane* could mean a nuclear family of 3-5, enlarged pseudo-*vlach* family of 6-8, or a large *vlach* family of 9 and more. It was happening also that the *baštine* of a "normal" size, i.e. when its size corresponded to units like "pulluk" or "tamam çift", became the basis for taxation in kind, which modifies the general rule that the Ottomans did not impose taxes on land, but upon the product. Then, in the 17th c. this "*sessio integra*" was used as a fiscal unit for collecting the *cizye*, although it was not stated explicitly in Ottoman sources.

### HRVATSKA SEOSKA DOMAĆINSTVA I OSMANSKE FISKALNE JEDINICE

#### S a ž e t a k

U novijoj je historiografiji dosta proširena teza o "demografskoj katastrofi" koja je navodno zahvatila europski dio Osmanskoga carstva u 17. stoljeću. Glavno uporište za nju predstavljaju velike, nerijetko drastične razlike u brojčanim iznosima haračkih poreznih jedinica (*cizye-hâne*) koje donose popisi glavarine iz 17. st. u odnosu na brojeve kuća u katastarskim defterima iz 16. stoljeća. Međutim, usporedba s neturskim izvorima može pružiti drugačiju sliku. Tako u slučaju Slavonije svi izvještaji putnika i vizitatora kao i komorski popisi nastali neposredno poslije prestanka osmanske uprave upućuju na broj kuća obične kršćanske raje približno jednak broju obveznika glavarine oko 1580. To pak potiče na pretpostavku da se u pojmu "kuća" (haračka) u 17. st. krije drugačija, tj. veća fiskalna jedinica od one iz starijih popisa. Podaci komorskih popisa to izravno potvrđuju na većem broju primjera. Da se do pouzdanijih pokazatelja može doći samo usporedbom neturskih i turskih izvora pokazalo se i na primjeru bosanskog ejaleta, gdje također nema primjetnijeg smanjenja broja haračkih kuća sve do katastrofa koncem 17. stoljeća (no pri tome je veličina "kuće" u ovom slučaju ostala vjerojatno ista). Konačno se može s razlogom pretpostaviti da, ukoliko prihvaćamo tezu o "demografskom rastu" u 16. stoljeću, taj rast traje do oko 1620, a zatim nastupa neka vrsta stagnacije, a ne "demografske katastrofe", barem do simboličke godine 1683. Analize koje bi na sličnoj crti razmišljanja bile poduzete i na primjerima drugih područja ne moraju nužno dati iste ili slične rezultate, no sigurno je da se potvrdila njihova neophodnost.