

PREFACE

Being a Hungarian, it was more or less natural that I choose issues related to the Hungarian territories of the Ottoman Empire as the main field of my research. Insufficient knowledge of the Turkish archival source material caused several misunderstandings earlier and led to various kinds of exaggerations regarding the effects of Ottoman domination. It cannot be denied that the final results of a foreign and different rule were negative for the development of the country; still the unfavourable trends should be portrayed, if possible, in a realistic manner, not forgetting the occasional positive tendencies, either. One of the most important questions in this respect is the demographic situation, which was often illustrated with the possible darkest colours. On the basis of the *tahrirs*, it can be said that in the 16th century neither the total number of the population diminished so drastically, nor the ratio of depopulation was so high, nor migration so intensive in Ottoman Hungary that it was supposedly using only chronicles, travelogues, and Habsburg tax-lists.

When starting to work on the *tapu defteris* of the *sancak* of Simontornya in the early '70's, I had to realise that the methodology of their evaluation was by no means on a satisfactory level. Moreover, several authors did not make efforts at interpreting the *defters* at all and restricted their activity to merely publishing a transcription of the texts with short introductions. My main concern with the existing 6 *mufassal* and 4 *icmal defteris* of the given region was to develop techniques with which the message of the thousands of names and figures can be somewhat better comprehended from the point of view of demography and economic history. Somewhat later, a similar approach has become more common with many authors while the philological tradition has also survived, especially in Turkey. This means that the socio-economic traits of certain regions of the Empire are comparatively well known, for other parts of it we possess only huge volumes or lengthy articles which are difficult to use in their present form and will remain mute until somebody makes them speak. It is to be emphasized once again here that there are several numerical characteristics which could and even should be worked out for the whole of the Empire and this task ought to be accomplished by the very person who really knows the peculiarities of the given *defter* or *defters* and the area concerned.

VIII DEMOGRAPHIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

A rather neglected territory of Ottoman studies worldwide is administration and within it prosopography and archontology. Very few lists of high ranking officials of a *vilayet* or a *sancak* have been prepared so far. The best sources helping to reconstruct the names of *beglerbegis* and *sancakbegis* in service at a given place are the *ruus defteris* and the *timar ruznamçesis*. When trying to collect the leaders of the *livas* of Szigetvár and Arad-Gyula, their testimony was complemented from several other sorts of documentary evidence.

The articles in this volume mostly deal with one of the above topics. They were left in their original form, and I corrected only the evident printer's errors, as well as some serious translation mistakes. If a paper labelled as "in the press" was finally published at another place than indicated, this was also referred to.

Géza Dávid