PART TWO

ECONOMIC CROSS-BORDER ECUMENICAL COMMUNITIES
IN THE PROVINCES OF THE EMPIRE
The oriental collection of the Württenbergische Landesbibliothek has a modest group of Ottoman manuscripts. One of them, Cod. Or. Fol. 15 was described as daily records of the Janissaries in Temesvár (Romanian Timișoara) in the fairly old local, hand-written catalogue when I had the chance to visit this institution in 1991.¹ A cursory examination of the codex revealed that this classification was misleading (not a single Janissary of that castle is referred to in the text) and the actual contents are something quite different. Namely, the defter is an early mukataa-register, or account-book² including treasury incomes collected in Becskerek (later: Nagybecskerek, Serbian Zrenjanin) and Becse (later: Törökbecse, Serbian Novi Bečej), respectively. From the exceptional courtesy of the responsible person in the library,³ I received a good copy of the whole text which I try to examine here in honour of Suraiya Faroqhi, whom I first met exactly 30 years ago at the very first conference of my life, the CÉPO (later CIÉPO) symposium in Hamburg. Her approach and

¹ As kindly imparted by Magdalene Popp-Grilli from the same library, there has been no change in the description in the meantime which reads as follows: "ein Tags Protokoll der Janitscharen in dem Königlichen Hauptquartier zu Temeswar. (Ein Rechnungsbuch ‘Defter’ 1553/54). A . . . Testo(?): In Wien verkauft den 1. Juni 1790".

² A pioneering work concerning this type of source was accomplished by L. Fekete and G. Káldy-Nagy. Cf. their Rechnungsbücher türkischer Finanzstellen in Buda (Öfen) 1550–1580. Türkischer Text, Budapest 1962 (also in Hungarian: Budai török számadáskönyvek, 1550–1580). Suraiya Faroqhi has also used this sort of documents extensively; especially in her Towns and Townsmen of Ottoman Anatolia. Trade, crafts and food production in an urban setting, 1520–1650, Cambridge–London–New York, etc. 1984 and in several articles. From the growing literature on the tax-farming system the last comprehensive survey was written by B. Çakır, Osmanlı mukataa sistemi (XVI–XVIII. yüzyıl), Istanbul 2003. For the Hungarian conditions see: P. Fodor, Some Notes on Ottoman Tax Farming in Hungary, in "Acta Orientalia Hungarica", LIV (2001), pp. 427–435.

³ Since I had a very short time in Stuttgart and it was impossible to know the exact cost of the reproduction, a member of the library staff offered to send the material to a friend in Germany who would then pay the fees. This unusual confidence impressed me very much and I am grateful for the generosity of the lady whose name I regretfully failed to ask.