

From Fiscal Diversity to Fiscal Convergence: Franciscan Monasteries in the Sanjak of Bosna during the First Century of Ottoman Rule

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Abstract

The present contribution is an attempt to analyse and conceptualise all available information concerning the principal Franciscan monasteries in Central Bosnia from the Ottoman tax survey registers of the fifteenth and first half of the sixteenth centuries. Many features in the monks' fiscal status at this period are shared with the *müste'min* or foreigner from abroad, a status which appears to be based on the *ahdnames* granted by Sultan Mehmed Fatih. Yet at the same time, individual monasteries can be shown to have been placed under different tax regimes. It is only towards the later period that a high degree of fiscal convergence can be observed, resulting in a stereotype wording of the relevant entries in the tax survey registers.

Keywords

monasteries – field-tax – *ahdname*

The five principal Franciscan monasteries situated in Central Bosnia are those of Fojnica, Kraljeva Sutjeska, Kreševo, Visoko and Olovo. They all are of pre-Ottoman origin, dating back to the fourteenth century. Indeed, they are among the few pre-Ottoman Bosnian institutions which, having continued to exist during the entire length of the Ottoman period, are still in existence today. Due to their continuously precarious situation vis-à-vis the Ottoman authorities their principals (known as 'guardians' or *gvardijani*) thought it prudent to keep

in a safe place any official paper issued them by the authorities, in particular those offering protection and privilege, which resulted in rich collections of Ottoman documents which today, after many losses incurred by fire, water and other hazards, in the case of some monasteries still number in their thousands.¹ But it is one Ottoman decree in particular that the Franciscans in the province of Bosna Srebrena consider their Charter of Privilege: the famous *Ahdname* granted them by Sultan Mehmed Fatih probably in 1463, allegedly on the field of Milodraž near Fojnica.² By this decree, and a similar one issued by the same ruler about one year earlier for the benefit of the monks of the mining town of Srebrenica,³ the Bosnian Franciscans imagined themselves protected against Ottoman oppression, not least since the Charter was confirmed (by means of a *tecdid* or 'renewal') by Sultan Bayezid II exactly twenty years later, in 1483.⁴ This latter sultan's decree, confirming the *ahdname* of his father, again pledged equal protection for all (Franciscan) monks in the *sancaks* of Bosna, Hersek, and Zvornik, by guaranteeing their lives, their freedom of movement, and their monasteries as their places of worship and abode against any oppression by

- 1 For instance, the archives of Fojnica monastery contain c. 3,000 Ottoman documents from the period between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries; those of Kraljeva Sutjeska, c. 4,500, are primarily from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.
- 2 The question about the authenticity of the *Ahdname* was last discussed comprehensively by Džaja, Srećko M., "Fojnička *Ahdnama* u zrcalu paleografije, pravne povijesti i politike: Kontekstualizacija *Ahdname* bosanskih franjevaca" [The *Ahdname* of Fojnica as reflected in palaeography, legal history, and politics: The contextualization of the Bosnian Franciscans' *Ahdname*], *Bosna franciscana*, 31 (2009), 103–28. See also Boškov, Vančo, "Pitanje avtentičnosti Fojničke *ahd-name* Mehmeda II iz 1463. godine" [The question of the authenticity of Mehmed II's *ahdname* for Fojnica from the year 1463], *Godišnjak društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, 28–30 (1979), 87–105. See also my "Dževdet-paša i Fojnička *ahdnama*" [Cevdet Pasha and the *ahdname* of Fojnica], *Bosna franciscana*, 49 (2018), 131–40 with further references.
- 3 Concerning *ahdnames* in general see Theunissen, Hans, "Ottoman-Venetian diplomatics: The 'ahd-names. The historical background and the development of a category of political-commercial instruments together with an annotated edition of a corpus of relevant documents", *Electronic Journal of Oriental Studies*, 1/2 (1998), 1–698; the *ahdname* for Srebrenica is discussed and re-edited by Ursinus, Michael, "Jedno osmansko jamstvo zaštite u korist franjevačkih redovnika Srebrenice iz godine 1462." [An Ottoman charter of protection for the benefit of the Franciscan friars of Srebrenica from the year 1462], *Bosna franciscana*, 47 (2017), 195–204.
- 4 Ursinus, Michael, "Ferman sultana Bajazida II. iz 1483. i fojnička *ahdnama* (izdana u Milodražu)" [Bayezid II's firman of 1483 and the *ahdname* of Fojnica (issued in Milodraž)], *Bosna franciscana*, 51 (2019), 9–26. This article contains the full wording of the *ferman* of Bayezid II. For an earlier translation into Serbo-Croatian see Šabanović, Hazim, "Turski dokumenti u Bosni iz druge polovine XV stoljeća" [Turkish documents in Bosnia from the second half of the fifteenth century], *Istorijsko-pravni zbornik*, 1/2 (1949), pp. 191–93 and facsimile 5.

It would appear, therefore, that the Franciscans of Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Zvornik *sancaks*, as a body, were treated as a privileged community by the Ottoman rulers, at least during the first century of Ottoman rule.

But is this borne out by the situation of Franciscan life in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole and the position of Franciscan monasteries vis-à-vis the Ottoman (tax) authorities? A close-up analysis of Ottoman revenue survey registers (*tapu tahrir defterleri*) for the region will allow us to throw some light on the fiscal treatment of the principal Franciscan monasteries in Bosnia during the period up to the middle of the sixteenth century (and beyond).

But before discussing the evidence from the individual *tapu tahrir defterleri* it might be useful to establish a synopsis of the position of the five principal Franciscan monasteries in Central Bosnia towards the end of our period of investigation. By such means it will immediately become clear that by the middle of the sixteenth century such a high degree of fiscal convergence had been achieved that the five principal monasteries under investigation (or rather four of them) could be dealt with in one single document. What is more, the stereotype character of the entries for each individual monastery makes this convergence visible at a stroke.

There are copies (*suret*) of the relevant sections of the 'new' register (*defter-i cedit*) which have been preserved detailing one single monastery; other such *defter* copies give details for groups of monasteries and constitute aggregate copies. Among the latter category is Fojnica AT 8a no. 1261, dated 28 July–6 August 1567. Because it is best suited to demonstrate the high degree of fiscal convergence attained by the middle of the sixteenth century, it is to be given in full translation despite (or rather because of) its highly stereotype character:

The *nahiye* of Visoko in the province (*liva*) of Bosna:

The market town (*pazar*) of Fojnica itself, belonging to the aforementioned [sub-province].

Income (*hasıl*): 46,947 [*akçe*]

The church [or monastery] in Fojnica itself (*nefs*): The monks who live in the church [or monastery] referred to have no permanent place of residence but come and settle down in turns (*be-nöbet*). Therefore, in ac-

5 Fojnica AT 8a, no. 1226. Here, in a decree issued by Sultan Selim II (1566–74) and dated 8–17 July 1567, there is reference to an 'old' decree issued by his father Süleyman, confirming these pledges.

cordance with the old register (*defter-i atik*), they have not been charged with any taxes (*rüsum*). [However] they remit to the land owner (*sahib-i arz*) the dues demanded by the Sharia (*hukuk-i şeriye*) and the customary charges (*rüsum-i örfiye*) for any plot they farm on *reaya* land.

The market town of Kreševo itself, belonging to Visoko [district].

Income: 29,145 [*akçe*]

The church [or monastery] in the market town of Kreševo itself: The monks who live in the church [or monastery] referred to have no permanent place of residence but come and settle down in turns (*be-nöbet*). Therefore, in accordance with the old register, they have not been charged with any taxes. [However] they remit to the land owner the dues demanded by the Sharia and the customary charges for any plot they farm on *reaya* land.

[The town of] Visoko itself.

Income: 26,204 [*akçe*]

The church [or monastery] in Visoko itself: The monks who live in the church [or monastery] referred to have no permanent place of residence but come and settle down in turns (*be-nöbet*). Therefore, in accordance with the old register, they have not been charged with any taxes. [However] they remit to the land owner the dues demanded by the Sharia and the customary charges for any plot they farm on *reaya* land.

The market town of Olovo itself.

[no income figure given]

The church [or monastery] in the market town of Olovo itself: The monks who live in the church [or monastery] referred to have no permanent place of residence but come and settle down in turns (*be-nöbet*). Therefore, in accordance with the old register, they have not been charged with any taxes. [However] they remit to the land owner the dues demanded by the Sharia and the customary charges for any plot they farm on *reaya* land. [This is] a copy of the recent detailed sultanic survey register which was taken [from the original], executed in the last decade of the forbidden [month of] Muharrem in the year 975 [of the Hegira, i.e. 28 July–6 August 1567]

[seal:] Mehmed⁶

6 Fojnica AT 8a, no. 1261. For a transcription of the document see Appendix 1.

This absence of a fixed abode is given as the principal reason for exempting the monks from any tax obligation. Only if they farm *reaya* land would they become liable to *raiyyet* taxes and dues. It can be shown that this arrangement was already in place more than fifteen years earlier after a new tax survey of the sub-province of Bosna had been executed in 1550 which apparently gave rise to the need of clarifying the status of the Franciscan monks in fiscal terms. A *temessük* or certificate issued by a certain Hasan between 16 and 25 July 1550 refers to the monks of Fojnica in the following way:

The reason for the execution of the document and the motive for drawing up the valid sheet is as follows: While in accordance with the exalted decree the *sancak* of Bosna is currently undergoing a new survey, [it is evident that] in conformity with the old register (*defter-i atik*) there existed from of old in the market town of Fojnica, situated in the *nahiye* of Visoko which belongs to the district of Sarajevo, a Frankish monastery (*Firenk kilisesi*) which every year three to four monks (*ruhban*) would enter in order to perform monk duties for periods of one year. Apart from those who return to their home regions, those referred to above would arrive at the monastery. According to the old register and in conformity with exalted decrees and the certificates (*temessükat*) of the previous fiscal agents (*ümena-i sabuka*) they are to be registered as follows: Because their residence in the aforementioned monastery (*kilise*) is neither fixed (*mukarrer*) nor permanent (*müebbed*), they are not liable to dues (*rüsüm*) or the field-tax (*ispence*). Only from the fields and vineyards in which they carry out agriculture would they remit the tithe at the rate of one seventh or one eighth [of the produce]. They are now being confirmed [in their status] in accordance with earlier practice, which fact was recorded in the new imperial register (*defter-i cedid-i hakani*). Following their wishes a certificate (*temessük*) was handed over to them, so that they can produce it as evidence when required. Written in the first decade of the venerated month of Receb in the year 957 [of the Hegira, i.e. 16–25 July 1550].
[seal:] Hasan⁷

⁷ Fojnica AT I-10. For a facsimile, the transcription, and the translation into German and Croatian of this document see my *FOJNICA. Osmanski dokumenti iz arhiva franjevačkog samostana* [*FOJNICA. Ottoman documents from the archive of the Franciscan monastery*], fasc. 2 (Fojnica: Franjevački samostan Duha Svetog, 2018), pp. 15–20.

The reader will have realised that one of the major Franciscan monasteries given at the outset is missing from this *defter* copy—Kraljeva Sutjeska. Without entering into a discussion about the possible reasons for its absence, this *lacuna* can be filled by a directly corresponding but later *defter* copy from the holdings of Kraljeva Sutjeska dated 15–24 October 1614:

Nahiye of Brod [modern Zenica] in the sub-province of Bosna:
Church [or monastery] in the market town of Sutjeska in the hands of the monks of the monastery of Sutjeska, belonging to the aforementioned [district]:
Three fields: 160 *dönüm*
One vineyard
Mill of the aforementioned monastery: in ruins
The monks of the said monastery have no fixed abode (*kararları olmayub*). They come in turns (*be-nöbet*). Since they are not resident, no dues (*rüsum*) are demanded from them in accordance with the old register (*defter-i atik*). The canonical taxes (*hukuk-i şer'îye*) and customary dues (*rüsum-i örfîye*) of the plots in which they carry out agriculture [however] are remitted to the landlord (*sahib-i arz*). Since this is to be found recorded verbatim in the old sultanic register, it was in accordance with the old register [now also] recorded in the new register (*defter-i cedid*).
[This is] a copy of the new sultanic register which was taken [from the original]. Written in the middle decade of the venerated month of Ramazan [one of the] months of the year one thousand and twenty three [of the Hegira, i.e. 15–24 October 1614].
[seal:] Yusuf⁸

The evidence from the three documents discussed so far shows that not only is the documentation itself highly stereotype in character, but that it aims at suggesting five fiscal characteristics as defining 'markers' for the status of the Franciscan monks, valid throughout all five Bosnian monasteries:

- 1 The monks who enter one of the five Bosnian monasteries come (from abroad?) on a temporary basis,
- 2 they stay in 'watches' or turns (*be-nöbet*) of one year,
- 3 their residence in the monastery of their choice is therefore neither fixed (*mukarrer*) nor permanent (*müebbed*),

8 Kraljeva Sutjeska, AT Kutija I, fasc. 2, broj 11. For a transcription of this document see Appendix 1.

are they to remit the tithe to the landlord.

It will be noticed that the above-listed 'markers' for the fiscal status of Franciscan monks in the Ottoman Empire, recorded by the middle of the sixteenth century, are shared with the *müste'min* or foreigner from abroad who is (temporarily) living in the Sultan's realm, 'taking advantage of the ruler's promise of *aman*' (this being the literal meaning of the [Arabic] term *müste'min*): He has no fixed abode on Islamic soil, does not own any real estate in the lands of the Sultan, has not concluded a marriage with a subject of the Sultan, and does not pay the poll-tax (unless he overstays). His legal status as *müste'min* is the subject of the clauses of the *ahdname* granted his own head of state by the Sultan. In the case of the Franciscan monks of Bosnia, the *ahdnames* granted by Sultan Mehmed Fatih referred to above would provide the legal point of reference for their exempt status. But unlike the case of the (Western) foreigner whose status kept him apart from the Sultan's (non-Muslim) subjects or *zimmis*, the *ahdnames* which the Conqueror granted the Franciscan monks 'living' in Bosnia was instrumental for their inclusion into the body of Ottoman *zimmis* which, despite their 'foreignness' from being seen as 'Frankish' (*Firenk*), became the accepted status of the Catholics in the Ottoman Empire, including the Franciscan monks.⁹ Let us sum up: For this late part of our period of investigation, the Franciscan monks of Bosnia (or rather their monasteries) are stereotypically listed in the 'new' sultanic survey records (*defter-i cedid-i sultani*) as enjoying far-reaching fiscal exemptions similar to, and for reasons resembling the example of, (Western) foreigners on Islamic soil (*müste'min*), despite being considered *zimmis*. Would this not all follow logically from the *ahdnames* of Sultan Mehmed II?

Looking now for *defter* entries about the fiscal status of each of the principal five Franciscan monasteries in the *sancak* of Bosna, we have the added advantage of being able to supplement the evidence by a number of individual

9 "The '*ahd-nâme* as a sultanic grant of safe-conduct was given to two types of beneficiaries: (1) foreign merchants and diplomats, who upon receiving the grant obtained the status of the *müste'min*, i.e., the *harbîs* with safe-conduct in Islamic lands, and (2) domicile Catholic population, that after receiving the '*ahd-nâme* acquired the status of the *zimmî*. In the latter case, the '*ahd-nâme* was identical with the *zimma*, and comparable to Prophet Muhammad's contract with the Christians of Najrân, and later contracts based on it..."; Kursar, Vjeran, "Legal status of Ottoman non-Muslims in Bosnia (1463–1699): A case study" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Bilkent University, 2007), p. 185. I am grateful to the author for having given me access to his valuable analysis before publication.

documents from the archives of the monasteries in question, especially those of Fojnica and Kraljeva Sutjeska. This complementary documentation allows us to establish that the exemption of the monastery of Kraljeva Sutjeska from all *avarız* taxes was already recorded in the survey register which was the product of the fiscal survey (*tahrir*) of 1515 drawn up by *emin* Abdülkerim and his secretary Sinan Halife,¹⁰ and confirmed at the occasion of the next detailed fiscal survey in the summer of 1527 which resulted in the *mufassal* or 'detailed' survey register (*tapu tahrir defteri*, abbreviated TD) TD 157 and its synoptic (*icmal*) companion, TD 164, kept in T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı – Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul (hereafter BOA).¹¹ Back in September 1515, the Catholic monks in Bosnia (specified as *fratar ve prodika*, i.e. brethren and preachers) had collectively asked for a confirmation of their exempt status (*bi-resm-i muafiyet*), arguing that their community had been exempt from the poll-tax (*haraç*), the field-tax (*ispence*) as well as all canonical and customary taxes and dues (*hukuk-i şer'îye ve rüsum-i örfiye*) from of old (*kadimü'l-eyyamdan*).¹²

While such pieces of supplementary evidence are few and far between for the early period of Ottoman rule in Bosnia, the Ottoman survey registers offer a more regular source base. For the present investigation, six (eight) of them are of particular importance: O.76, a synoptic register for the *sancak* of Bosna composed during 1468/9 from the Muallim Cevdet Koleksiyonu (Atatürk Kitaplığı, Istanbul) and recently translated in full by Ahmed S. Aličić;¹³ BOA TD 18, a synoptic survey register of the *sancak* of Bosna from 1485 (considered 'incomplete'; unpublished); BOA TD 24, the earliest 'detailed' register for Bosnia dated 1489 (unpublished); BOA TD 56, another *icmal* or synoptic register which resulted from the fiscal survey of 1515 (see above, unpublished); BOA TD 157, the earliest detailed (*mufassal*) register for Bosnia to also include large parts of the (later) *sancak* of Klis (unpublished), dated 1528–30 (with its 'abridged' companion BOA TD 164); and finally BOA TD 212 of 1542, a 'detailed'

10 Document dated 20–29 September 1515, in Kraljeva Sutjeska AT Kutija IV, cardboard box without archival number. Here, the *muafiyet* status of the monastery of Kraljeva Sutjeska is reported as being recorded (*bi-resm-i muafiyet sebt olunmuş*) in the latest detailed fiscal survey register just completed by *emin* Abdülkerim and his *katib* Sinan Halife.

11 Fojnica AT 8a, no. 1218, dated 9–18 August 1527 (authenticated copy; original in Kraljeva Sutjeska, AT Kutija VI, cardboard box (tube) = fasc. 24; no archival number).

12 Fojnica AT 8a, no. 1265 (authenticated late copy; original in Kraljeva Sutjeska, see above), dated 20–29 September 1515. Another late copy *sub* Fojnica AT 12b, no. 2626.

13 Aličić, Ahmed S., *Sumarni popis sandžaka Bosna iz 1468/69. godine* [A summary survey register for the sandjak of Bosna from 1468/69] (Mostar: Islamski Kulturni Centar Mostar, 2008).

version of the content of each entry will be shown in Table 1, while the entries themselves will be given in their full Ottoman wording (transliterated on the basis of Yeni Redhouse) in Appendix II.

Table 1 shows that the Ottoman *tapu tahrir defterleri*, with few exceptions, deal with the Franciscan monasteries of Bosnia in a rather cursory way until 1516, if they record them at all. Happily, the earliest synoptic survey register for the sub-province of Bosna, O.76 (1468/69) is relatively detailed with regard to the monastic communities, giving the number of 'males' (*nefer*) or 'households' (*hane*) for four of the five monasteries under investigation. On the other hand, BOA TD 18, from 1485, only records the existence of one out of the five monasteries, using the term 'church' (*kilisa*) for both 'church' and 'monastery', as is common usage in Ottoman scribal practice before the later sixteenth century (when the term *monastır* is increasingly employed also for Catholic monasteries). Even BOA TD 56 (1516) employs the same approach by listing the monastic establishment together with the numeral '1', but without revealing any further details. Yet it is the first survey register to record all five 'big' Franciscan monasteries. Only the *mufassal* or 'detailed' survey register BOA TD 24 from 1489 goes far beyond the general practice, if only in two instances: The monasteries of Kraljeva Sutjeska and Çatal (which in all likelihood was an Orthodox monastery and consequently does not concern us here) are given in BOA TD 24 together with details as regards their fiscal status. For Kraljeva Sutjeska, at the time part of the *zeamet* of Mustafa Beğ, brother of Ali Paşa, the *defter* records as follows:

[The occupants of] the monastery of Sutjeska. They have in their possession an Imperial decree by His Majesty our Sultan [which confirms] them to be free and exempt from all extraordinary *divaniye* taxes. Guardian [is] Gjorgi [son of] Mihovil.

[They work] three fields, one vineyard, two [wind]mills, and one [water] wheel, in ruins.

It should be noted at this point, that the expression 'exempt from all extraordinary taxes' (*avarız-i divaniyeden muaf ve müselleme*) does not imply that the monastery was also considered exempt from all 'regularly imposed' dues and taxes, such as the field-tax (*ispence*) or the tithe (*öşür*), much as the monks would have welcomed such an interpretation. Exemption from the tithe was particularly rare and, like other exemptions, required a sultanic decree to this

TABLE 1 Synopsis showing the principal Franciscan monasteries in Bosnia and their tax obligations as recorded in the Ottoman survey *defter*s of the period 1468/9–1542

	1468/69 (O.76)	1485 (BOA TD 18)	1489 (BOA TD 24)	1516 (BOA TD 56)	1528–30 (BOA TD 157, BOA TD 164)	1542 (BOA TD 212)
Fojnica	Monastery of Fojnica 3 males	-	-	Monastery of Fojnica 1	“It was recorded that they hold a noble decree to be free and exempt [from field-tax (<i>ispence</i>)] so long as they do not hold <i>baštinas</i> and do not settle in one [of their] places.”	Confirmed
Kreševo	Monastery of Kreševo 3 males	-	-	Monastery of Kreševo 1 [field-tax still in place?]	“Because they hold a noble decree in their hands to be free and exempt so long as they do not have independent <i>baštinas</i> and do not settle in one [of their] places, they sent a petition to the Sublime Porte, [upon which] it was decreed that they should be exempt from the field-tax (<i>ispence</i>) but pay the tithe and the <i>salarıye</i> tax.”	Confirmed
Kraljeva Sutjeska	Monastery of Sutjeska households 3	Monastery of Sutjeska	“They have in their possession an Imperial decree by His Majesty our Sultan [which confirms] them to be free and exempt from extraordinary taxes (avarız-i divaniye).” [but not field-tax ?]	Monastery of Sutjeska 1	“They hold Imperial decrees [...] for their immunity (<i>muaf olmak için</i>). Yet they pay the tithe from their agricultural produce. They do not live in a permanent place, but apparently after a year other monks would come to [occupy] their places and settle down.”	“They are Frankish (<i>Firenk</i>) monks. They hold Imperial decrees [...] for their immunity (<i>muaf olmak için</i>). Yet the tithe is taken from their agricultural produce [...]”

1468/69 (076)	1485 (BOA TD 18)	1489 (BOA TD 24)	1516 (BOA TD 56)	1528-30 (BOA TD 157, BOA TD 164)	1542 (BOA TD 212)
Olovo	-	-	Monastery of Olovo 1	“Church (monastery) in the afore- mentioned (town of) Olovo itself; Fra Ivan, son of Gojan, another Fra Ivan, Fra Jerolim. It was recorded that in their hands there are Imperial decrees concerning [their being] exempt (<i>muaf</i>).”	Confirmed
Visoko	Monastery of Visoko 2 males	Monastery of “They are the monks who occupy the monas- tery of Visoko”	Monastery of Visoko 1	“In the monastery of Visoka they are Frankish (<i>Firenk</i>) monks; they pay the field-tax (<i>ispence</i>), the tithe as well as <i>salarıye</i> . [...] They [also] remit the tithe.”	“In the monastery of Visc are Frankish (<i>Firenk</i>) mo: pay the tithe and the <i>salı</i> The aforementioned hav (permanently) settled in monastery. From their la which they carry out agri they pay the tithe and th They do not pay any <i>rısi</i> as the field-tax.]”
1468/69	1485	1489	1516	1528-30	1542

effect. That such a dispensation from the tithe did occasionally happen shows the example of Çatal monastery which, by 1489, succeeded in obtaining just such an exemption.¹⁴

For the period from 1528 to 1530 we have several *mufassal* or 'detailed' survey registers at our disposal, beginning with BOA TD 157. In fact, this register was drawn up, according to its preamble, from between 13 and 22 November 1528, while the preceding fiscal survey appears to have already been in progress by the summer of 1527 when the monastery of Kraljeva Sutjeska was confirmed in its exemptions by the personnel pursuing the current fiscal survey (*tahrir*).¹⁵ These details matter because it is a well-known part of Franciscan history writing that in the year 1524, the *annus horribilis* per excellence, the monasteries of Konjic, Visoko, Sutjeska, Kreševo, and Fojnica were all devastated by 'the Turks', with considerable loss of life among the Franciscans and several (all?) churches destroyed.¹⁶ Indeed, some of the monasteries were never rebuilt (such as Konjic). Nowhere in the fiscal survey registers do we come across references to Konjic monastery in the same way as we find them for the other monastic establishments. But to find in our documentation, already by 1527/1528–30, the monasteries of Visoko, Kraljeva Sutjeska, Kreševo, and Fojnica as 'working' (and revenue generating) monastic communities, and this in more consistent detail than ever before, may surprise the reader, since only a few years separate the *annus horribilis* of the chronicles from the evidence of the *defters*. Kraljeva Sutjeska, according to the *Fojnička kronika* one of the victims of Ottoman violence and destruction during 1524, had their monastic fields, vineyards, and a mill now in the care of Fra Šimon (their then guardian) confirmed as exempt possessions (*muaf ve müsellemlik*) at some time before August 1527, only three years (if that) after the alleged event, while still under obligation to remit the tithe (*öşür*) from their produce.¹⁷

14 BOA TD 24, p. 746: "şimdiki halde padişahımız öşrin muaf ve müsellemlik hükm-i hümayun vermiş".

15 See above, note 11.

16 "1524. Razoriže Turci bosanske manastire Kognic, Visočki, Sutiški, Kreševski i Fojnički. U Visokomu gvardian Fra Filip, u Sutisci gvardian Fra Matic Skoroević, u Fojnici gvardian Fra Jakov Vognić, u Kreševu gvardian Fra Baro Fojničanin. I kad razoriše carkeve povedoše ministra Fra Stipana Bučića i š gnim fratara 12. I uteče ministar. Fratre mučiše i biše ali ministra ne izdaše"; Truhelka, Ćiro, "Fojnička kronika" [The chronicle of Fojnica], *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja Bosne i Hercegovine u Sarajevu*, 21 (1909), p. 449.

17 Document AT 8a, no. 1218 from the Fojnica holdings has been published with facsimile, transcription, and a German and Croatian translation in my *FOJNICA 3. Osmanski dokumenti iz arhiva franjevačkog samostana* [FOJNICA 3. Ottoman documents from the archive of the Franciscan monastery] (Fojnica: Franjevački samostan Duha Svetog, 2020), fasc. 13, pp. 61–69.

Fra Stjepan, [son of] Vučić, Fra Andreas [who] holds a certificate (*tez-kire*), and Fra Lovre [son of] Riste (?).

It was recorded that they hold a noble decree [which confirms them] to be free and exempt (*muaf ve müselleme*) [as long as] they do not hold *baştinas* and do not settle in one [of their] places.

It is possible, even probable, that this exemption includes the field-tax (*ispence*), but definitely not the tithe (*öşür*) from the agricultural produce.

The picture becomes clearer in the case of Kreševo. The entry from the same 1528–30 survey register BOA TD 157 states:

[Concerning the occupants of] the monastery in the aforementioned town [of Kreševo]: Because they hold a noble decree in their hands to be free and exempt (*muaf ve müselleme olalar*) as long as they do not hold [their own] independent *baştina* and do not settle in one [of their] places, they sent a petition to the Sublime Porte, [upon which] it was decreed that they should be exempt from the field-tax (*ispence*) but pay the tithe and the *salaria* tax for the places in which they grow produce. Their produce is to be listed under that of Kreševo.

Evidently, the monks had to submit a petition to the Sublime Porte before being granted what Fojnica might have enjoyed already—a dispensation from paying the field-tax (*ispence*), on condition they remit the tithe (*öşür*) and the *salaria* tax from their field produce.

Next in line is the monastery of Kraljeva Sutjeska which in the meantime had become part of the *zeamet* of Kasım Beğ Kopčić. The entry in BOA TD 157 stipulates:

These are the monks of the monastery of the market town of Sutjeska. In their hands they hold Imperial decrees by His Majesty the Sultan, Refuge of the Universe, for their immunity (*muaf olmak için*). Yet they pay the tithe from their agricultural produce. They do not live in a permanent place, but apparently after a year other monks would come to [occupy] their places and settle down. [They work] three fields, two windmills, and one [water] wheel.

The wording makes it highly likely that in the case of Kraljeva Sutjeska, in parallel with Fojnica (but not Kreševo as initially), the exemption includes the field-tax (*ispence*) while still being liable to the tithe (*öşür*).

Finally Olovo and Visoko. While the case of Olovo is indistinct and does not merit any detailed discussion (the entry from BOA TD 157 is almost verbatim repeated in BOA TD 211), that of Visoko is significant in that here we have an example of fiscal convergence happening noiselessly 'overnight', so to speak. BOA TD 157 contains the following entry:

In the monastery of Visoka they are Frankish (*Firenk*) monks; they pay the field-tax (*ispence*), the tithe as well as the *salariye*. – Andrija, son of Dukić, Gjurak (?), son of Radoje. Income from the field-tax (*ispence*) 50, wheat *keyl* 2 worth 45 [*akçe*] [...] They [also] remit the tithe (*öşür*).

It can be seen from Table 1 that while the field-tax (*ispence*) was still explicitly listed as being due in 1528–30, it had been dropped by the next census laid out in BOA TD 211 (ca. 1542) where it is explicitly stated that the monks of Visoko monastery were no more liable to any *rüsum*. No reason is given for this change, no intervention by the monks referred to which may have resulted in their exemption from the field-tax by 1542:

In the monastery of Visoka they are Frankish monks. They pay the tithe and the *salariye*. – Andrija, son of Dukić, Gjurak (?), son of Radoje, Fra Marko Preslić, the deacon (*diyak*). The aforementioned have not settled and taken their abode in the said monastery. From their lands on which they carry out agriculture they pay the tithe and the *salariye*. They do not pay any *rüsum*.

To sum up: The picture emerging is one of increasing fiscal convergence in the course of the first one hundred years or so of Ottoman fiscal control over the five principal Franciscan monasteries in Central Bosnia. The main focus of contention appears to have been the field-tax (*ispence*), the exemption from which was accorded by the central authorities to individual monasteries, not collectively. This would seem to be in striking contrast with the grant of protection (*aman*) to the entire body of Catholic monks in Bosnia which is at the heart of the *ahdname* issued by Sultan Mehmed Fatih (see above). For a considerable period Franciscan monasteries liable to the field-tax co-existed with others being exempt from it. Only at the end of the period under investigation would all major Franciscan monasteries in Central Bosnia have achieved exemption from the field-tax, one of the principal *raiyyet rüsumu*

five 'markers' of Franciscan fiscal identity discussed above) contributed to the parallelism of monasteries with and without field-tax liability throughout the first century of Ottoman rule in Bosnia. Evidently it took petitions by individual monasteries to redress any such unequal treatment. This set in motion the evolution of an increasingly homogeneous fiscal regime, which, in turn, necessitated a broad and general justification for the Treasury's decision to drop the field-tax obligation for all the major Franciscan monasteries, despite their occupants generally being considered *zimmis*. It is probably against this background that one has to read the increasingly stereotype insistence of the *defter* entries that the *Firenk* monks are in fact not (permanently) resident in their monasteries, nor would they have taken their place of abode there, but rather would give up their places to other monks after a 'watch' (*be-nöbet*) of one year.¹⁸ Perhaps only such a formula allowed squaring the circle.

It is in the nature of such a narrative that, rather than closely reflecting facts 'on the ground', it creates 'facts' to be endorsed for the sake of the broader argument. What may have been true (or at least partly true) for the early Franciscan monastic life under the Ottomans, i.e. that it was an existence characterised to a large extent by mobility (sometimes even straddling the Ottoman lands and those of the 'Franks'), later became what amounts to a fiction. Many monks, if not the majority of monks, would have regularly outstayed their alleged 'watch' of one year.¹⁹ If nobody else, the guardians (*gvardijani*) surely would, since their terms were fixed to three years at a time. Rather, it seems, the fiction of general mobility would hark back to the notion expressed in Sultan Mehmed II's *ahd-name* of 1463 (confirmed by his son and successor, Sultan Bayezid II, twenty years later) that "even those who leave [the country] and return shall enjoy security and protection".²⁰ As so often, by taking recourse to the 'original' state of affairs (in Ottoman: *adet-i kadim üzere*), the argument of the day would be won.

¹⁸ The earliest relevant fiscal documents, such as Fojnica AT 8a, no. 1265, dated 20–29 September 1515 (being an authenticated copy of the original kept in Kraljeva Sutjeska), or the entry concerning Kraljeva Sutjeska in BOA TD 24 (1489), p. 307, do not mention the temporary nature of the monks' habitation in their monasteries.

¹⁹ See for instance the cases of Olovo and Visoko where we have continuity in personnel between 1528–30 and 1542.

²⁰ The original editor of the decree issued by Sultan Bayezid II in 1483, Hazim Šabanović, translates the related passage as follows: "Isto taka neka im je dopušteno da dovedu čovjeka sa strane (iz tuđine) u zemlje moga carstva" ["Equally they should be allowed to bring people here (from abroad) into the lands of my realm", translation mine, M.U.]; Šabanović, "Turski dokumenti u Bosni", pp. 191–93 and Facsimile 5.

APPENDIX I

Fojnica at 8a no. 1261

Transcription:

Nahiye-i Visoka der liva'-i Bosna
Nefs-i bazar-i Foyniçe tabi-i mezbur
hasıl 46947

Kilisa der nefsi-i Foyniçe zıkr olan kenisada sakın olan ruhbanların
kararları olmayub be-nöbet gelüb sakın olmağın defter-i atik mucibince
rüsüm vaz' olunmayub re'aya toprağında ziraat eyledikleri yerin hukuk-i
şer'ıye ve rüsüm-i örfıyesin sahib-i arza verirler

Nefs-i bazar-i Kreşeva tabi-i Visoka
hasıl 29145

Kilisa der nefsi-i bazar-i Kreşeva zıkr olan kenisada sakın olan ruhbanların
kararları olmayub be-nöbet gelüb sakın olmağın defter-i atik mucibince rüsüm
vaz' olunmayub re'aya toprağında ziraat eyledikleri yerin hukuk-i şer'ıye
ve rüsüm-i örfıyesin sahib-i arza verirler

Nefs-i Visoka
hasıl 26204

Kilisa der nefsi-i Visoka zıkr olan kenisada sakın olan ruhbanların kararları
olmayub be-nöbet gelüb sakın olmağın defter-i atik mucibince rüsüm
vaz' olunmayub
re'aya toprağında ziraat eyledikleri yerin hukuk-i şer'ıye ve rüsüm-i örfıyesin
sahib-i
arza verirler

Nefs-i bazar-i Olofca

[no indication of any hasıl figures]

Kilisa der nefsi-i Olova zıkr olan kenisada sakın olan ruhbanların kararları
olmayub be-nöbet gelüb
sakın olmağın defter-i atik mucibince rüsüm vaz' olunmayub re'aya toprağında
ziraat eyledikleri yerin hukuk-i şer'ıye ve rüsüm-i örfıyesin sahib-i arza verirler
suret-i defter-i cedid-i mufassal-i sultanî budır ki nakl olındı tahriren fi
evahir Muharrem el-haram sene 975

Transcription:

Nahiye-i Brod der liva-i Bosna
Kilisa der nefis-i bazar-i Sutiska der tasarruf-i ruhbanan-i kilise-i Sutiska tabi-i
mezbur
Tarla 3 dönüm 160
Bağ
Dolab-i kenise-i mezbur harab
Zikr olan kenisede sakin olan ruhbanların kararları olmayub be-nöbet gelüb
sakin olmağın defter-i atik mucibince
üzerlerine rüsum vaz' olunmayub ziraat ve hiraset eyledükleri yerlerin hukuk-i
şer'îye ve rüsum-i örfiyeleri
sahib-i arza verür deyü defter-i atik-i sultanide mukayyed bulunmağın ber
muceb-i defter-i atik defter-i cedide sebt
olındı
Suret-i defter-i cedid-i sultani budır ki nakl olındı tahriren fi evasıt şehr-i
Ramazan el-mubarek min şuhur sene selase işrin ve elf
[seal:] Yusuf

APPENDIX II

This appendix contains all *defter* entries known to me at the time of writing with reference to the monasteries in question; verbatim quotes are given in transliteration (in italics). The monasteries are listed in alphabetical order:

– Fojnica –

O.76, fol. 22b: *Kilisa-i Fojniçe nefer 3* (in *hassha-yi padişah*)

BOA TD 18, p. 1: (*Fojniçe kilisesi* not recorded under *hassha*)

BOA TD 24, p. 17: (*Fojniçe kilisesi* not recorded under *hassha*)

BOA TD 56, p. 7: *nefis-i bazar-i Fojniçe kilisa 1* (in *hassa-i padişah*)

BOA TD 157, p. 21: (under *hassa-i padişah*)

Kelise der nezd-i Foyniçe el-mezbure:

*Fra İstegan [veled-i] Vuçiç, Fra Andriya, tezkere şode, Fra Lovre [veled-i] Riste [?].
Mezkurların baştinaları olmayub ve bir yerde sakin olmayub muaf ve müselleme
olalar deyü ellerinde hükm-i şerif olmağın kayd olındı*

BOA TD 211, p. 37:

kilisa der Foyniçe el-mezbure

Fra Blaj Kovaçik, Fra Franç[es]ko Dragik, Fra Nikola Grubik

*Mezkurların baştinaları olmayub ve bir yerde dahi sakin olmayub muaf ve
müselleme olalar deyü ellerinde hükm-i şerif olmağın kayd olındı deyü defter-
er-i atikte mukayyed bulunmağın ber karar-i sabik defter-i cedide dahi kayd
olındı*

– Kraljeva Sutjeska –

O.76, fol. 52a: *Kelisa-i Sutiska hane 3* (in timar)

BOA TD 18, p. 77: *Kelisa-i Sutiska* (still in timar)

BOA TD 24, p. 307: (in zeamet of Mustafa Beğ, brother of Ali Paşa)

*Kilise-i Sutiska ellerinde padişahumuz hazretlerinin hükm-i hümayun vardır
avarız-i divaniyeden muaf ve müselleme olalar deyü*

Gvardiyan Görgi [veled-i] Mihovil

Tarla 3, bağ 1, asyab 2, dolab 1 harab

BOA TD 56, p. 46: *Nefs-i bazar-i Sutiska kelisa 1* (in zeamet of Hüseyin Beğ veled-i
Hasan Beğ)

BOA TD 157, p. 525; cf. BOA TD 164, p. 59: (in zeamet of Kasım Beğ Kopčić)

[...]

*Kilisa-i bazar-i Sutiskanın keşişleridir ellerinde padişah-i alem-penah hazret-
lerinden muaf olmak için hükm-i hümayunları vardır ve amma ziraat etdikler-
inden öşür alınur ve mezburlar mukarrer bir yerde durmayub bir yıldan sonra
yerlerine aher keşişler gelüb temekkün ederlerimiş*

Tarla 3, bağ 1, astar-i bad 2, dolab 1

[...]

BOA TD 212, p. 262: (in timar of Mustafa Bosna, *kethüda-i kale-i Banaluka* (?),
Ömer, veled-i Lütfi; Murad veled-i Yusuf and Mustafa veled-i Karagöz)

yerlerine aher keşişler gelüb temekkün ederlerymiş
Tarla 3, bağ 1, asyab 2, dolab 1
Fra İvan veled-i Boğdan, Fra Görgi Dobrun, Fra Pavel Stipan
[...]
– Kreševo –

O.76, fol. 23a: *Kilisa-i Kreşeva nefer 3* (in *hassha-yi padişah*)

BOA TD 18, p. 1: (*Kreşeva kilisesi* not recorded)

BOA TD 56, p. 7: *nefs-i bazar-i Kreşeva kilisa 1* (in *hassa-i padişah*)

BOA TD 157, p. 18: (in *hassa-i padişah*)

Kilise der nefis-i mezbure [Kreševo] mezburların müstakil baştinaları olmayub ve bir yerde sakin olmayub muaf ve müsellemler olalar deyü ellerinde hükm-i şerif olmağın südde-i saadetine arz olunub ispençeden muaf olub ziraat etdikleri yerlerden öşür ve salariye emr olındı mahsulları Kreşeva mahsulü ile mahsubdur

BOA TD 211, p. 16:

Kilise der nefis-i mezbure mezkurların müstakil baştinaları olmayub ve bir yerde sakin dahi olmayub muaf ve müsellemler olalar deyü ellerinde ahkam-i şerife olub ispençeden muafiyet üzere defter-i atikte dahi mukayyed bulunmağın ber karar-i sabık defter-i cedide sebt olındıki ziraat ve hirasat etdikleri yerlerden öşürlerin verirler

*Fra İvan Rudik, Fra Matiya Kreşeva, Fra İvan Foynica
Yekun mea mahsul-i nefis-i Visoka 118736*

– Olovo –

BOA TD 56, p. 8: *Nefs-i bazar-i Olofça kelisa 1*

BOA TD 164, p. 81: *Kilisa der nefis-i Olofça el-mezbure. Fra İvan [veled-i] Goyan, Fra İvan-i diğeri, Fra Yerolim. Mezkurların ellerinde muaf üzere hükm-i hümayunları olub kayd olındı*

BOA TD 211, p. 87:

Kilisa der nefis-i Olofça-i mezbure

Fra İvan veled-i Goyan

Fra İvan-i diğer

Fra Yerolim

Mezkurların ellerinde muafiyet üzere hükm-i hümayunları olub kayd olundu

– Visoko –

O.76, fol. 28a: *Kelisa-i Visoka nefer 2* (in hass of Mirliva)

BOA TD 18, p. 18: *Kelisa-i Visoka* (in hass of Mirliva)

BOA TD 24, p. 56: (in hass of Mirliva) *Kilise-i Visokayı dutan keşişlerdir* [among the mücerred and bive]

BOA TD 56, p. 23: *Nefs-i bazar-i Visoka kelisa 1*

BOA TD 157, p. 170; cf. TD 164, p. 19:

*Kelise-i nefis-i Visokada Firenk keşişleridir ispence ve öşür ve salariye verirler –
Andriya veled-i Dukik, Güräk (?) veled-i Radoye. Hasıl-i ispence 50 gendüm keyl
2 semen 45*

[...] *hasıl-i çayır iki bin elli akçe resm-i tapu ile Hüsrev Beğ hazretleri üzerine kayd
olundu öşrin verir*

BOA TD 211, p. 466:

*Kenisa-i nefis-i Visokada Firenk keşişleridir öşür ve salariye verirler
Andriya veled-i Dukik, Güräk (?) veled-i Radoye, Fra Marko Presliç, Diyak
Mezkurlar zikr olan kenisada tavattun ve temkin etmiyüb be-nöbet durub ziraat
ve hiraset etdikleri yerlerinden öşür ve salariye verürler rüsüm vermezler*