

BELĞRADĪ RĀŞĪD

(d. 1882 or 1883)

LIFE

Information on B.R.'s life is limited. Bursalı Mehmed Tāhir (d. 1925) gives his name mistakenly as Şākir Paşa.¹ F. Babinger (d. 1967), who remarks that B.R. was not well-known, follows H. Mordtmann (d. 1932) in stating that he is the author of an historical work on Serbia.²

The exact date of his birth is unknown, but it is known that B.R. was of Bosnian origin.³ His father Muşţafā Beg (d.?) was an *alaybegi* in the province of Semendire (Smederevo) and a member of the notable Zā°imzāde family of Belğrad (Beograd).⁴ B.R. lived in a beautiful mansion in Belğrad and had an extensive library.⁵ He served as fiscal director⁶ and accountant⁷ under the command of the wardens of Belğrad and participated in negotiations of disputes between Serbs and Muslims.⁸ Following the appointment of Mehmed Hūrşid Paşa (d. 1293/1876), warden of Belğrad, to the governorship of Bosnia in 1268/1852, B.R. left his family in Belğrad and moved to Bosnia to serve the pasha.⁹ He later returned to Belğrad in 1274/1858.¹⁰ In 1277/1860 B.R. was summoned to Istanbul to participate in sessions of the Council of Reforms (*Meclis-i Tanzimat*) concerning the *çiftliks* in Bosnia, and he contributed to the legislation on the *çiftliks* and *ağas* in Bosnia.¹¹ This code of rules, which was issued in both Bosnian and Turkish, included contracts for the resolution of disputes between *ağas* and *begs* in possession of *çiftliks* and Christian tenants who sharecropped the land.¹² After his stay in Istanbul, B.R. returned to Belğrad. In the aftermath of the bombardment of the city by Ottoman soldiers in 1278/1862 and the consequent migration of Muslims out of Belğrad, B.R. returned once again to Bosnia.¹³ B.R. also drew maps¹⁴ and served as undersecretary of inspections during Ahmed Cevdet Paşa's (d. 1312/1895) investigations in Bosnia and Mostar in 1280/1863-64. He also chaired the commission on affairs regarding *çiftliks*.¹⁵

Ottoman archival records indicate that B.R. abandoned his possessions, joined a wave of emigrants from Belgrade and immigrated to Istanbul, probably in 1285/1868.¹⁶ He took an office in Thessalía similar to the one he had held in Bosnia but later returned to Istanbul and died there ca. 1299/1882-83.¹⁷ He held the rank of *paşa* and earned a *Mecidiye* medal of the third degree.¹⁸

WORKS

① *Ta°rih-i Vaq°a-i Hayretnümā-i Belğrad ve Şirbistān*

This two-volume work is the only history composed by an Ottoman author that focuses exclusively on the Serbian question. Although B.R. states in the section entitled *İhtār ve Taqrizāt Yollu Beyān-ı Hāl* of the first volume that he divided his work into three volumes, the third volume has not been discovered to date.¹⁹ The first volume relates the events which transpired in Serbia between 1217-65/1802-49, and the

HISTORIANS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

C. Kafadar H. Karateke C. Fleischer

second volume covers the period between 1265-77/1848-61. The work also contains an addendum entitled *Ta'rīḥ-i 'İbretnümā* written in 1288/1871-72 (see below).²⁰

The structure of the work follows a common form used in classical Eastern literature and is based on the conversations of imaginary characters in the form of questions and answers. The protagonists of these conversations are two brothers named °Āqil and Nāqil. In *Ta'rīḥ*, °Āqil Beg reflects on the behavior of the Serbs against the Muslims, realizes that he has no future in Belgrad, leaves his brother behind, and migrates to Cairo in 1241/1825-26. When the Serbians force the Muslims to leave Serbia, desolate Nāqil Beg sets out to reunite with his brother. The two meet in Cairo, and °Āqil Beg asks his brother why he is so wretched. In response, Nāqil Beg begins to relate the events that transpired after his brother left Serbia.²¹

The work provides information on the origin and spread of the first Serbian rebellion (1219-28/1804-13).²² The most detailed evidence pertains to the reigns of Miloš Obrenović (r. 1230-55/1815-39; 1274-76/1858-60), Aleksander Karadordević (r. 1258-74/1842-58) and Mihail Obrenović (r. 1255-58/1839-42; 1276-83/1860-67). The end of the first volume includes copies of four *fermans* from the period 1245-54/1829-39 on the autonomy of Şirbistān.²³ The end of the second contains a copy of a *ferman* on privileges granted to Aleksander Karadordević in 1270/1853-54,²⁴ and a copy of a *berat* on the appointment of Mihail Beg (Obrenović) to Şirbistān in 1277/1860-61.²⁵

B.R.'s critical attitude toward the Serbians is apparent throughout the work.²⁶ Stojan Novaković attributes B.R.'s outlook to the author's financial interest in Ottoman control over Serbia. According to Novaković, Ottoman elements in Serbia consisted of two main groups: The first were former *sipāhis*, who possessed considerable properties and followed a lenient policy toward the Serbs, while the second consisted of urban merchants, craftsmen, and those of Bosnian origin who were in conflict with the Serbs. Novaković argues that B.R. was the leader of the second group.²⁷

B.R. wrote in a simple and smooth language that includes Serbian and Turkish proverbs and idioms. B.R.'s narrative usually progresses chronologically but also includes digressions and flashbacks.

The work, which was among the sources of *Ta'rīḥ-i Cevdet*,²⁸ is an important primary source for the period because B.R. personally witnessed most of the events he relates. B.R. provides information regarding relations between Serbian lords and the wardens of Belgrad, and he emphasizes Russia's policy concerning the Balkans. In the sections in which he focuses on the privileges granted to Serbia, B.R. notes Russia's pro-Serb interventions in relations with the Ottomans.

② *Ta'rīḥ-i 'İbretnümā*

Composed as an addendum to *Ta'rīḥ-i Vaq'a-i Hayretnümā-i Belgrad ve Şirbistān*, this work provides information on the retreat of Ottoman armies from Şirbistān in 1283/1866-67 and the abandonment of fortresses to the Serbians. The addendum includes copies of two *fermans* at the end. The first concerns the abandonment of the

HISTORIANS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

C. Kafadar H. Karateke C. Fleischer

Belgrad fortress to the Serbs and the grant of the title of warden to Mihail Beg in 1283/1866-67.²⁹ The second includes Süleymān I's (926-74/1520-66) orders commanding Ġāzī Bālī Beg (d. 934/1527) to treat the soldiers and the subjects well and to obey the law.³⁰

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Editions: (1) Vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1291/1874) [vol. 2 remains unpublished]. (2) Fatma Erten. *Vak'a-i Hayretnüma Belgradî Raşid Paşa*. M.A. Thesis (Istanbul University, 1991) [includes vol. 2].

② *Ta'rīḥçe-i İbretnüma*

Manuscript: (1) Istanbul Atatürk Library, Muallim Cevdet O-3; 22 fols. (52 numbered pages), 25 lines, talik.

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¹ Bursalı Mehmed Tâhir, *Osmanlı Mü'ellifleri*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1342/1923), 167.

² Franz Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, trans. C. Üçok (Ankara, 1982), 415.

³ Stojan Novaković, "O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu," *Rašid-Beja istorija čudnovatih dogadaja u Beogradu i Srbiji*, trans. S. Čohadžić (Belgrade, 1894), 6.

⁴ B.R., *Ta'rīḥ-i Vaq'a-i Ḥayretnüma-i Belgrad ve Şirbistān*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1291/1874), 22.

⁵ Novaković, "O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu," 6.

⁶ BOA, A. MKT. UM., 414/100 (29 Dhulhijja 1276/19 July 1860); 417/49 (10 Muharram 1277/29 July 1860).

⁷ BOA, A. MKT. UM., 521/41 (27 Jumada I 1278/30 November 1861).

⁸ B.R., *Ta'rīḥ*, vol. 1, 189-194.

⁹ B.R., *Ta'rīḥ*, vol. 2, 35.

¹⁰ B.R., *Ta'rīḥ*, vol. 2, 67.

¹¹ B.R., *Ta'rīḥ*, vol. 2, 74-75.

HISTORIANS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

C. Kafadar H. Karateke C. Fleischer

- ¹² Ahmed Cevdet, *Maruzat*, ed. Y. Halaçoğlu (Istanbul, 1980), 68.
- ¹³ Novaković, “O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu,” 8.
- ¹⁴ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 2, Istanbul Millet Library, Ali Emiri Tarih 603, 74.
- ¹⁵ Ahmed Cevdet, *Tezakir*, ed. C. Baysun (Ankara, 1991), vol. 3, 8, 45, 57; Ahmed Cevdet, *Maruzat*, 62.
- ¹⁶ BOA, İrade, Dahiliye, 50784 (Rajab 1293/May-June 1876); Novaković, “O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu,” 9.
- ¹⁷ Novaković, “O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu,” 9.
- ¹⁸ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 2, 85.
- ¹⁹ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 1, 5.
- ²⁰ B.R., *Ta’rīhçe-i İbretnümā*, Istanbul Atatürk Library, Muallim Cevdet O-3, 49.
- ²¹ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 1, 2-3.
- ²² B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 1, 12-46.
- ²³ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 1, 232-251.
- ²⁴ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 2, 136-137.
- ²⁵ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 2, 138.
- ²⁶ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, vol. 1, 50.
- ²⁷ Novaković, “O ovoj knjizi i pisci njenu,” 7.
- ²⁸ Ahmed Cevdet, *Ta’rīh-i Cevdet*, vol. 9 (Istanbul, 1309/1891), 127.
- ²⁹ B.R., *Ta’rīhçe-i İbretnümā*, 50.
- ³⁰ B.R., *Ta’rīh*, 50-52.
- ³¹ No manuscript of the first volume has been discovered to date.

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