

MEHMED BEY OBRENOVIĆ, SANJAKBEY OF HERZEGOVINA

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Özet

Mehmed Bey Obrenović, Hersek Sancakbeyi

Bu makale, İstanbul Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi ve Dubrovnik Devlet Arşivlerinden derlenen tarihsel belgeler esas alınmak üzere, günümüz Bosna-Hersek bölgesinden kimselerin Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun siyasi, askeri ve ekonomik hayatında oynadıkları önemli rolü ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu şahsiyetlerden birisi, ailesi Neretva nahiyesinin (bugünkü Hersek'te) Podhum köyünden gelen Mehmed Bey Obrenović'tir. Mehmed Bey, önce bir kapucubaşı, sonra Mora'nın sancak beyi, Hersek'in sancak beyi (Ekim 1500'den Temmuz 1504'e ve Ağustos 1510'dan Aralık 1511'e kadar) ve İşkodra sancak beyi idi.

Mevcut tarihi kaynaklarda en geniş bilgi Mehmed Bey'in Hersek Sancak beyi olarak, özellikle sıkça gerçekleşen Venedik saldırısından ülkeyi müdafaa için yaptığı faaliyetler hakkındadır. Mehmed Bey, kendisi ile ilgili haberleri ona ileten Dubrovnikliler ile iyi ilişkiler içerisinde idi. Dubrovnikliler ona hediyeler ve ihtiyaç hâsıl olduğunda doktor gönderiyorlardı. Ayrıca eşi için Venedik Cumhuriyeti'nden kumaşlar getiriyorlardı.

Mehmed Bey, İşkodra sancakbeyi iken Peç'te medrese ve tekke inşa etmiş ve vakfının bekasını sağlamak için Neretva nahiyesindeki çiftliğinden ve Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun diğer bölgelerindeki mülklerinden vakıflar yapmıştır.

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Obrenović ailesinden Mehmed Paşa'dan başka, kardeşleri Rumeli beylerbeyi Halil Paşa, Vişegrad 'da zeamet sahibi Hamza Bey ve Neretva nahiyesinde timar sahibi Petar bilinmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Obrenovic, timar, Bosna-Hersek, arşiv

Abstract

This paper presents an attempt to show, on the basis of the relevant historical material from Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi and Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi in Istanbul, as well as from State Archives of Dubrovnik, how the individuals from the region of present day Bosnia and Herzegovina played an important role in political, military and economic life in the Ottoman Empire.

One of them was Mehmed Bey Obrenović whose family is originally from Podhum village in nahiya Neretva (today in Herzegovina). Mehmed-bey was firstly a kapiçibasha – Commander of the palace guards, then sanjakbey in Moreja, sanjakbey of Herzegovina (from the October 1500 to July 1504, and from August 1510 to December 1511) and sanjakbey in Skadar.

In the available historical sources, the largest number of data is concerned with the actions of Mehmed Bey as Herzegovinian governor where he particularly excelled in the defense of the country from the frequent Venetian attacks. He held friendly relationships with people of Dubrovnik who informed him, as their neighbours, on the news which would be of his concern. They would also send him presents and their physicians if needed, and they also brought textile for his wife from the Venetian republic.

While he was the governor of Skadar, Mehmed Bey built madrasah and tekke in Peć and made a pious endowment for the maintenance of the waqfs from his čifluk (property) he held in nahiya Neretva, as well as he endowed some other estates in the other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

Apart from Mehmed Bey, from the Obrenović family his brothers Halil Pasha, a Rumeli beylerbey, Hamza Bey, the Vişegrad zeamet owner and Petar, the owner of timar in nahiya Neretva, are known.

Key Words: Obrenovic, timar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, archive

From its establishment in 1470 until the establishment of the Sanjak of Klis in 1537, the Sanjak of Herzegovina was a markedly border-land sanjak ruled by prominent governors with special powers. The Porte appointed to that office people of thrust and with experience since they had often led military, political, and diplomatic actions due to the fact that at the time the Adriatic Sea was a theatre of serious conflicts between the Ottomans and the Venetians.¹ The seat of the Herzegovina Sanjak was at Foča from its establishment to 1572. The most reliable sources on the basis of which we were able to establish a list of governors of Herzegovina at the time of their rule in this sanjak are kept in the State Archives of Dubrovnik. Actually, on the occasion of appointment of each new governor, the Dubrovnik authorities would send their envoys to pay their respects to him and hand in the established gifts. Sanjakbeys would also send their envoys with presents to Dubrovnik. So, on the basis of materials kept in Dubrovnik, we know that Mehmed Bey Obrenović twice held the office of the Herzegovina governor, from October 1500 to July 1504, and from August 1510 to December 1511.²

Mentioned in the available literature and in the Dubrovnik sources are: Petar, son of Obren as the progenitor of the Obrenović family of Herzegovina, and his sons: Halil Pasha, later on the Beglerbey (Governor-General) of Rumelia; Hamza Bey, a Višegrad zeamet owner; and Mehmed Bey, Sanjak-bey of Herzegovina.³ However, on the basis of the Ottoman sources, we can establish that

¹ Toma Popović, "Upravna organizacija Hercegovačkog sandžaka u XVI veku", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* XII-XIII/1962-63, Sarajevo, 1965, p. 75.

² Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku (DAD), Consilium rogatorum XXIX, 9, XXXI, 237, 248, XXXII, 75; Lettere di Levante, XVII; T. Popović, "Spisak hercegovačkih namesnika u XVI veku", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* XVI-XVII/1966-67, Sarajevo 1970, pp. 93-94; Ćiro Truhelka, *Tursko-slovenski spomenici dubrovačke arhive*, Sarajevo, 1911, pp. 217-218; Behija Zlatar, "Neki podaci o sandžakbegu Mehmedbegu Obrenoviću", *Prilozi Instituta za istoriju* X/II, 10/2, Sarajevo 1974, pp. 341-346. (Further: B. Zlatar, "Neki podaci ...")

³ *Historija naroda Jugoslavije* II, Zagreb 1960, p. 117; B. Zlatar, "Neki podaci ...", p. 342; B. Zlatar, "O nekim muslimanskim feudalnim porodicama u XV i XVI stoljeću", *Prilozi Instituta za istoriju* XIV, 14-15, Sarajevo 1978, pp. 103-104; Ć. Truhelka, *Tursko-slovenski spomenici dubrovačke arhive*, pp. 217-218.

both Halil Pasha and Hamza Bey, and Mehmed Bey, like Petar, were sons of Obren, and that Petar had a son Radica.⁴

Petar, son of Obren had a timar estate in the Neretva nahiya worth 40.225 akçes which was entered in the Bosnia Sanjak defter (public records) of 1485: *Petar, son of Obren*.⁵ In the same defter his çiftlik (farm estate) was also entered with revenues of 600 akçes, and the çiftlik of his son Radica: *Radica, son of the mentioned Count Petar*.⁶

Another son of Obren's, Hamza Bey was mentioned in 1485 and 1489 as the owner of part of the Višegrad zeamet with revenues of 73,685 akçes: *Hamza-bey veled-i Obren*.⁷

Halil Pasha was the Beglerbey of Rumelia and from a note in the defter for the Sanjak of Klis from 1550, we can see that he descended from this family: "...*Obrenoğlu Halil-pasha*".⁸ In the same defter, some other members of this family are also mentioned: Matijaš, son of Matej; Filip, son of Grgur; Jakub, son of Filip; Mihovil, son of Andrija; Pavel and Tomo, sons of Matej who are resolutely said to *be of the deceased Obrenović Halil Pasha's lineage*.⁹ The same source says that "*it is a Bosnian Christian mezraa in the village of Podhum*", which means that they were most likely followers of the Bosnian Church, or Bosnian Christians (bosanski krstjani). Therefore, we can with certainty say that the Obrenovići (Obrenoğlu) came from the village of Podhum in the Neretva nahiya, where they possessed estates.

Of all members of the Obrenović family, in sources there is most information about Mehmed Bey Obrenović. Before his appointment as Sanjakbey of Morea, Mehmed Bey was a kapicibasha (Commander of the palace guards). A duty of the commander of palace guards was also to lead foreign envoys for an audience with the sultan and carry out various confidential functions, especially diplomatic ones. That he had frequent encounters with foreign envoys as sultan's kapicibasha is shown with giving evidence by Andrej Griti, the bailo

⁴ İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Tapu defter (TD), No 18, pp. 5, 25, 56; TD No 211, p. 399; TD No 284, p. 238; M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, *XV-XVI. Asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livası, Vakıflar-Mülkler-Mukataalar*, İstanbul 1952, p. 408.

⁵ BOA, TD No 18, p. 25.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 56; TD No 24, p. 265.

⁸ *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka iz 1550. godine*, Obradili Fehim Dž. Spaho i Ahmed S. Aličić, Priredila Behija Zlatar, Sarajevo 2007, p. 244.

⁹ *Ibid*.

of Venice who informed the Doge in Venice about that.¹⁰ Kapicibasha's influence at the court was so great that officials of Dubrovnik regularly presented him with gifts when they came for an audience with the sultan. Mehmed Bey may have established good relations with the Dubrovnik authorities back that time which later on, when he became the Sanjakbey of Herzegovina, were much closer and more frequent. When in 1499 some functionaries in the Sanjaks of Bosnia and Herzegovina started to harass the Dubrovnik officials in their trading business, the government of Dubrovnik ordered their envoys Lukarević and Kabužić to pay visit to Mehmed Bey, sultan's kapicibasha, brother of Halil Pasha Obrenović, to present him with 20 ducats and *on behalf of the old friendship that the government has always cherished for his household, and which it is still today nurturing for his brother Halil Pasha* to kindly ask him to intervene with the Porte for them. We do not see the outcome of this case from sources, but we do know that friendship between the two families and the Dubrovnik authorities continued.

Mehmed Bey Obrenović was appointed as Sanjakbey of Morea in 1499, at the time when Sultan Bayezit declared war to the Venetians which lasted until 1502. This war showed that the Ottoman fleet back that time was able to resist the Venetians. Since the region of Herzegovina, whose defence was poorly put up, was exposed to constant attacks by the Venetians, the Porte decided to entrust the duty of the Herzegovina governor to Mehmed Bey Obrenović, who obviously gained experience in war actions while he was the Sanjakbey of Morea. There is information that back that time the Dubrovnik authorities supplied textiles for him.¹¹

Mehmed Bey Obrenović spent a short time in Morea, since as early as October 1500 the news reached Dubrovnik that Mehmed Bey had been appointed as governor of Herzegovina to replace Ahmed Bey Evrenosović. The news delighted the Dubrovnik authorities; as we can see, they had known each other earlier and had been on good terms. They immediately instructed their envoys to give him their best regards and present him with the usual gifts, because he is, as the instructions say, *of Count Petar's noble descent, who was one of the*

¹⁰ T. Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik u XVI veku*, Beograd 1973, p. 416, footnote 185.

¹¹ T. Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik u XVI veku*, p. 52.

*most notable citizens of Dubrovnik.*¹² Immediately Mehmed Bey early in 1501 answered back with gifts having Duke of Mostar present them with two sajjadas (rugs), two blankets, four shirts, and two *kavads* (rolls) of leather.¹³ Taking a number of measures he tried to strengthen power and prepare his sanjak for defence.¹⁴ With that aim he set off for Novi Sad to carry out inspection in that region. The Dubrovnik envoys met him at Konavle with the usual gifts, but they found him ill. They immediately sent their physician Andrija to treat him. In August 1501, the Dubrovnik authorities sent Mehmed Bey 200 ducats as present.¹⁵ In 1502 Mehmed Bey came twice to Novi – first in May and then in December with the Bosnian sanjakbey Skender Pasha *to put up fortifications at Verige*, as the providur of Kotor said in his report to Venice.¹⁶ The miseries caused in the last year of the war against the Venetians affected this sanjakbey's financial status so that he was forced to ask for a loan from the Dubrovnik authorities. The government appropriated an amount of 20,000 aspras and sent him the money to Novi through its envoys Stijepo Sorkočević and Benko Maroje Gučetić. In December 1502 he was forced again to ask for a certain quantity of corn from the Dubrovnik authorities, which they also approved.¹⁷

Late in 1503 the Council of Dubrovnik decided to send their envoy to Mehmed Bey to demand repayment of the money they had lent to him, fearing that Mehmed Bey would be called off from Herzegovina. The fears proved justified as on 24 January 1504 news spread that a new governor was coming to Herzegovina.¹⁸ Mehmed Bey was appointed as sanjakbey of Shkodër, where he stayed to all likelihood until August 1510, when there is reliable information that he was reappointed as governor of Herzegovina.¹⁹ The authorities of Dubrovnik, as usual, sent their envoys Stjepan Sorkočević and Jakša Gundulić to welcome and present him with lavish gifts worth 66 ducats.²⁰ The following year, in 1511 Mehmed Bey focused his

¹² Ć. Truhelka, *Tursko-slovenski spomenici dubrovačke arhive*, Sarajevo 1911, p. 217.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ T. Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik u XVI veku*, p. 53.

¹⁵ Ć. Truhelka, *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹⁶ T. Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik u XVI veku*, pp. 53 and 67.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

¹⁸ Ć. Truhelka, *Op. cit.*, p. 218.

¹⁹ DAD, Consilium rogatorum XXXI, 237, 248.

²⁰ DAD, Consilium rogatorum XXXI, 232.

activities on the building of Novi, asking support from his neighbours, the Dubrovnik authorities. He sent them a letter with a request to give him their boats to transport wood from Neretva to Novi, which the Council approved on 16 April 1511. He did not complete the works on the construction of Novi fortifications as in the mid-1511 he went to war, and later the same year he was reappointed as governor of Shkodër.²¹

All the time while he held the office of the Herzegovina Sanjakbey from October 1500 to July 1504 and from August 1510 to December 1511, Mehmed Bey Obrenović was being informed by the Dubrovnik authorities, as their neighbour, about the news he was interested in; when a need arose, they sent him their physicians and various presents; and for his wife they supplied textiles from Venice.²²

While he was in Shkodër as governor, Mehmed Bey had a madrasah and a tekke built in Peć, which at the time belonged to the Sanjak of Shkodër. He owned a çiftlik in the Neretva nahiya, which he certainly inherited from his father Obren. In the 1540 defter of the Sanjak of Bosnia, like in the defter of the Klis Sanjak from 1550, there is information about this çiftlik: *The çiftlik of Mehmed Bey, son of Obren. Those are the villages of Podhum and Seonica which belong to Neretva.*²³ He owned them as a mulk, and he endowed them later on to the madrasah and tekke in Peć. That he inherited the çiftlik from his father Obren is seen from the information in the 1574 defter of the Klis Sanjak where there is a record that the çiftlik was known as *Obren: The çiftlik [covered] part of the village Podhum and part of the village Seonica, known as the Obren çiftlik with pastures - otlak and meadows belongs to the Neretva nahiya. It is owned by Mehmed Bey's waqf (endowment) for the madrasah and tekke in the town of Peć in the Sanjak of Shkodër.*²⁴

A waqfnamah (deed of endowment) with Mehmed Bey's endowments, from the second decade of the month of Rajab 922 (10-

²¹ T. Popović, "Spisak hercegovačkih namesnika u XVI veku", pp. 93-94

²² T. Popović, *Turska i Dubrovnik u XVI veku*, pp. 52-54.

²³ B. Zlatar, "Popis vakufa u Bosni u XVI stoljeću", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju* XX-XXI/1970-71, Sarajevo 1974, p. 136; *Opširni popis Kliškog sandžaka iz 1550. godine*, p. 263.

²⁴ BOA, TD. No 533, p. 14.

19 August 1516), has been preserved.²⁵ We can see from this document that Mehmed Bey endowed, as already mentioned, real properties in the villages of Podhum and Seonica; then estates in Plovdiv; flour mills in the village of Dolići near Peć; six millstones on the river Čehotina in Foča; a substantial amount of cash; houses in the village of Çavuşlu and in Plovdiv; then four more flourmills (unknown on which waters as the name of a river is missing in the text of the waqfnamah); a rice mortar near Plovdiv; and some more houses and a horse-stable. Having fixed salaries for the officials of the madrasah and tekke in Peć, he ordered that after such expenses had been paid, an imaret (soup kitchen) should be built at a suitable site with a third of his property.²⁶ It is impossible to establish from the available sources whether the imaret was erected.

From Mehmed Bey Obrenović's waqfnamah, we learn that he had several sons and wife. The house he bought from the heritage of Mehmed Bey, son of Mihailo... *he bought for his distinguished sons and descents from father to son, from generation to generation until they have died out and disappeared...*²⁷ There is a piece of information about his wife in the Dubrovnik sources that she *...as wife of a sanjakbey, a close friend of the Dubrovnik people, was presented with silk textiles worth 30 ducats.*²⁸ The authorities of Dubrovnik used to send presents only to those governors' wives who descended from higher classes of the then society, which means that Mehmed Bey's wife was either a daughter or a sister of a high dignitary.

Information from the relevant historical sources and literature shows that Mehmed Bey Obrenović had a notable role in administration of three different provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the first half of the 16th century: Morea, Herzegovina, and in Shkodër. The richest information is about his activities in Herzegovina where he excelled as sanjakbey in defence of the country and in restoring to normal a rather difficult situation being the result of constant raids of the Venetians. In the sources available there is no information about whether he had some endowments built in Herzegovina, but his

²⁵ İstanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Arşivi, Part One of the waqfnamah (beginning), entered under call number E 4127, and the end under call number D 7093; B. Zlatar, "Neki podaci ...", pp. 343-345; B. Zlatar, "O nekim muslimanskim feudalnim porodicama u Bosni u XVI stoljeću", p. 103.

²⁶ B. Zlatar, "Neki podaci...", pp. 344-345.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 345.

²⁸ Ć. Truhelka, *Tursko-slovenski spomenici dubrovačke arhive*, p. 218.

contribution to urbanisation and development of cultural and educational activities lies in the fact that he had a madrasah and a tekke erected in Peć, and for their upkeep he left substantial estates in different parts of the Ottoman Empire.

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