



## FEVZĪ MOSTĀRĪ

---

**FEVZĪ** (FAWZĪ) **MOSTĀRĪ** (d. 1160/1747), author of the *Bolbolestān*, an imitation of Sa‘dī’s *Golestān*, the only prose work written in Persian known to be by a Bosnian author.

Born at Blagaj, some 10 km to the southeast of Mostar in Herzegovina, in the second half of the 11th/17th century, Fevzi may be presumed to have received his early education in Mostar before proceeding, like so many ambitious Bosnians, to Istanbul. He was initiated there into the Mawlawī order and received at the celebrated Galata hospice instruction in Persian language and letters as an integral part of his Sufi training. His sojourn must have been quite long, for Qodsī, a fellow Mostārī writer one of whose Turkish *qaṣīdas* is the chief source for Fevzi’s biography, remarks, “With nostalgia he recalls the names of Istanbul and Galata” (cited in Kaṅjī, p. 115). Returning to Mostar, Fevzi took up residence at the Dār al-Maṭnawī, an institute for the study of the *Maṭnawī* founded almost 100 years earlier by another Mawlawī Persianist of Mostar, Derviş Paşa (Darvīš Pāšā; d. 1011/1602). Fevzi began to give instruction both in the Persian language and in the *Maṭnawī*; as Qodsī expressed it, “a host of the silver-faced would come to his room/to learn from him the sugar of the Persian tongue” (cited in Kaṅjī, p. 115).

It was while ensconced at the Dār al-Maṭnawī in Mostar that Fevzi conceived the ambition of imitating or even equalling the *Golestān*. The fruit of this ambition, the *Bolbolestān* (compl. in 1152/1739), consists of six chapters (each named a “garden” and subdivided into “trees” and “leaves”) dealing with the following topics: wise sayings of the Sufis; repentance and its beneficial



effects; encounters between ascetics and kings; stories of assorted great men; biographies of Bosnian and Ottoman poets who wrote in Persian; and miscellaneous edifying anecdotes. Fevzi fell inevitably short of his goal; in terms neither of style nor of content is the *Bolbolestān* comparable with the *Golestān* or even with other imitations such as the *Bahārestān* of Jāmī or the *Parīšān-nāma* of Qā'ānī. His prose nonetheless has the virtue of clarity, and the work contains much valuable information on the social and cultural history of Ottoman Bosnia, especially Mostar.

Fevzi also composed a certain amount of verse in both Persian and Turkish. Particularly celebrated is his elegy in Turkish to Shaikh Yūsuf of Mostar (d. 1119/1707), a poem in which he incorporates the Mawlawī theme of the Sufi dance mirroring the rotation of the heavens. Fevzi died and was buried in Mostar in 1160/1747, succeeded by other Bosnian Mawlawīs who cultivated Persian letters, both in Mostar and elsewhere.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

A lithograph edition of the *Bolbolestān* was published in Istanbul in 1312/1894-95; facs. ed. and tr. by M. Malić as *Bulbulistan du Shaikh Fewzi de Mostar, poète hercegovinien de langue persane*, Paris, 1935; tr. into Bosnian (Serbo-Croat) by D. Čehajić as *Bulbulistan*, Sarajevo, 1973.

Copies of Fevzi's verse are said to exist at the Herzegovinian Archive in Mostar. See also H. Algar, "Persian Literature in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5/2, 1994, pp. 260-61.

S. Balić, *Kultura Bošnjaka: Muslimanska Komponenta* (The culture of the Bosnian: the Muslim component), Vienna, 1973, pp. 63, 93, 98.

Idem, *Die Kultur der Bosniaken*, Vienna, 1978, pp. 37, 55.

Idem, *Das unbekannte Bosnien: Europas Brücke zur islamischen Welt*, Cologne, Weimar, and Vienna, 1992, p. 249.



D. Čehajić, “Pjesme Fevzije Mostarca na turskom jeziku” (Poems by Fevzi of Mostar in the Turkish language), *Prilozi za Oriejentalnu Filologiju* 18-19, 1968-69, pp. 285-314.

Idem, *Derviški Redovi u Jugoslovenskim Zemljama* (The dervish orders in the Yugoslav lands), Sarajevo, 1986, p. 33.

M. Kanjī, *al-Jawhar al-asnā fī tarājem ‘olamā’ wa šo‘arā’ Būsna*, Cairo, 1349/1930.

A. Popovic, “La Littérature ottomane des musulmans yougoslaves: Essai de bibliographie raisonnée,” *JA* 259, 1971, p. 317.

M.-A. Rīāḥī, *Zabān wa adabīyāt-e fārsī dar qalamrow-e ‘Oṭmānī*, Tehran, 1369 Š./1990, pp. 199, 237.

H. Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine na Orientalnim Jezicima* (Literature of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Oriental languages), Sarajevo, 1993, pp. 449-52.