

SALIH TRAKO

THE POET ISHAK TELALOVIĆ FROM LIVNO
AND HIS TĀRĪH ON THE CAPTURE OF VARAD*

Cataloging manuscripts in the Bosniaks' Institute in Zürich in 1991, we came across an unknown name of a poet from Livno, Ishak efendi Telalović, whose pen name (*maḥlaṣ*) was Madḥī. Fehim Nametak indicated this name earlier, but that was just a notice.¹ Another working visit to the Bosniaks' Institute in 1996 enabled us to learn much more about this poet of ours from the text of his uncovered poem. It was a *poem-tārīh*, composed on the capture the Varad fortress in Erdelj. Before translating the poem and introducing the poet, we will have to say at least something on the *tārīh* as a poetic form cultivated in the literatures of the Islamic peoples.

The meaning of the Arab word, *tārīh*, among other things, is "to tell the date (year) of an event," "to tell a chronogram." The *tārīh* as a literary form is a special stylistic form which implies the art of expressing a certain message relating to a certain event in a short sentence or phrase, using words the sum of whose letters' numeric value, according to a specifically established system, so-called "abḡad ḥisāb," equals to and signifies that year.

The *tārīhs* were used to celebrate important events of any kind (birth, death, circumcision, accession to power, pilgrimage, military campaign, construction of a building, etc.). The most common method to write a *tārīh* was the form of a poem, a few lines of which (sometimes more than ten) related the event, whereas the last *bayt* (chrono-line) expressed a certain year. It was also possible to tell a *tārīh* in a single line. Sometimes the poet told several *tārīhs* on an event, displaying his skill thereby. A part of the text telling the *tārīh* needed to correspond semantically to the whole poem. With all this in mind, it is easy to draw the conclusion that the poet had to be a man of great learning, very well informed, gifted, witty, and a master in language and style – in one word, a man endowed with qualities reserved solely for the most gifted.

We also need to note that the poet could tell the *tārīh* in six different ways:

- to find words for the complete *tārīh* (*tārīh-i tām*), in which the sum of the numeric value of letters adds up to the year which was intended to be expressed;

* See: "Pjesnik Ishak Telalović iz Livna i njegov tarih o osvojenju Varada". In: *POF* 46/1996, Sarajevo, 1997, pp. 103-114.

¹ Fehim Nametak, *Pregled književnog stvaranja bosansko-hercegovačkih Muslimana na turskom jeziku*, "El-Kalem", Sarajevo, 1989, pp. 87 and 135.

- if the sum of *tārīḥ*'s letters added up to a larger or lesser value than the one needed, the author indicated in the text that a certain number was to be added to or subtracted from that value, in order to come to the year sought (*tāmiyeli tārīḥ*).
- to tell the *tārīḥ* through the sum of the numeric value of letters excluding periods (*tārīḥ-i mühmel*) or the sum of the value of letters including periods (*tārīḥ-i mucevher*), whereby the author displayed his virtuosity in composing the *tārīḥ*;
- to write the *tārīḥ* so that it gives the twofold value (*tārīḥ-i duta*), which needs to be divided by two to come to the year sought;
- “lafzan wa ma‘nan” was the *tārīḥ* of which both words and the sum of the numeric value of letters expressed the *tārīḥ* sought.²

All the aforementioned ways of expressing the *tārīḥ* are to be found in the last *bayt* of the poem. It should also be noted that some poets took on the most demanding artistic task: to express the *tārīḥ* of the celebrated event throughout the poem by the numeric value of letters of each hemistich (*mıṣrā‘*). This remark pertains to the poet Ishak Telalović and his *tārīḥ* that will be presented here.

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The title of the poem in the manuscript No 142 (sheet 14b) in the Bosniak Institute in Zürich is:

İhlevneli İshāq efendi Dellāl-zāde
 Varad fethine söylediği tārīḥ dir
 (The Tārīḥ Sung by Ishak-efendi Telalović
 from Livno on the Capture of Varad)

Bearing in mind the anonymity of the author, the event on which this *tārīḥ*-poem was sung, and especially bearing in mind the way in which it was sung, one can say that this poem is a very interesting discovery of a high literary achievement in the *tārīḥ* genre in the Balkans during the Ottoman rule.

The author of this *tārīḥ*-poem was a Bosnian poet from the 17th century, Ishak effendi Telalović from Livno, whose pen name was Madḥī. This poem of his, albeit being his only poem found until now, reveals a poet of exceptional skill. The poet sang this *tārīḥ*-poem on capturing the Varad fortress in Erdelj by the *serdār* (commander) Ali-pasha 1070/1659-60 (a year after that, in 1071/1660-61, he will become a *wālī* (governor) in Bosnia, praising the army commander (*serdar*) Ali-pasha, comparing not only his name but also his heroic qualities with his namesake's, the caliph Ali's name and courage. The poet here took on a difficult task of composing twenty precise (*tām*) *tārīḥ*s for this capture in a poem of ten *bayts* (20 lines – *mıṣrā‘*), demonstrating thereby his poetic skill.

Furthermore, in the four *bayts* following the poem, functioning as a warning – footnote, the poet declared his intention of writing this poem and de-

² See: Fehim Nametak, *Divanska poezija XVI i XVII stoljeća*, Institut za književnost – Svjetlost, Sarajevo, pp. 29 and 30.

Transcription of the poem

Ihlevneli Ishāq efendī Dellāl-zāde Varād fetḥine söylediği tārīḥ dir

Āşaf-i şems-i cihān, ecmel-i re'y-i naqqād
Dāver-i dādger mālīk-i esrār-i 'ibād

Ya'nī serdār-i mükerrerem o meh ü zeyn-i duvel
Faşş-i qalbinde numūdār oluben resm-i cihād

Oldi hemnām-i laṭīfi 'alem-i şīr-i 'azīz
Alī pāşā-yi 'aliyyu-l-himem şān-i sedād

Oldı fermāndih-i baḥr u berr ü mes'ūd dilā
Bu durervār ise quṭb-i vüzerā-i emcād

Qıldı tevsī'-i memālikde ebed sa'y-i cemīl
Yine küffār-i melā'īn-i müdemmir berbād

Cünd-i ervāḥ-i muqaddesle 'aceb nehc etdi
Mulk-i Erdel-de olan ḥisn-i ḥasīn-i u guşād

Böyle bir 'ālī himem ancaq olur ez vüzerā
Ḥusn-i bāl ile ola nāyil-i miftāḥ-i Varād

Bārekellāhu te'ālā bi qudūmin ḥasen
Şānehu-l-Ḥaqqu 'ani-l-'aybi ilā yevmi tenād

Ser-i a'dāye vura seyfini her demde alup
Aça ebvāb-i ğazāye ebedā bāb-i cihād

Medḥiyā, ol diz-i zībāye müverriḥ-i nāzik
Bād īn cehd mübārek ve zehī fetḥ-i Varād

Sene 1070

Ey medār-i kuberā Āşaf-i şāhib-i irşād
Vey melād-i ğurebā dāver-i pāk istimdād

Ḥākpāy-i şerefe geldi bu rü mālīde
Bir qaşīde iduben fetḥ-i Varāde inşād

Cümlesi kāmīl ola ḥüb yirmi tārīḥ
Ide her mışrā' tārīḥ ne nāqış ne ziyād

Gerçi medḥinde sehl oldı teveqquf vāqi'
Līk maqbūl olur ḥātīme-i ḥusn-i 'ibād

Translation of the poem

*The tārīḥ composed by Ishak-efendi Telalović from Livno
on the capture of Varad*

Asaf¹ of the world's sun², the man of the most correct thought
The righteous vizier, acquainted with the secrets of peoples' lives

The noble army commander, the moon and the adornment of the land
In his heart's core war plans are forged

His beautiful name is the personal name of that mighty lion³
Ali-pasha, with high ideals, notable, righteous

He is the high, noble commander on the land and in the sea
This highly esteemed pillar of famous viziers

His efforts were always to expand the provinces
So he trounced the infidels

Lo and behold, how he sent the army and the angels⁴
He captured that fortified town in the Erdelj Province

Such a capable man can only be found among viziers
He got hold of the keys to Varad with the help of luck

May God bless this fortunate coming
May God preserve him from faults until the Judgment Day

May his sword sever heads of our enemies every day
May he always open the door of a courageous fight

Madḥī, the refined writer, told the tārīḥ for this beautiful fortress
May this enterprise be blessed, the fortunate capture of Varad!

The year 1070 (1659-60).

¹ Asaf is the personal name of the Prophet's vizier and the emperor Sulayman (Solomon the sage). This name was often used as a metaphor to distinguish a vizier, in this case Ali-pasha.

² Allusion to the reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire.

³ An allusion to the fourth caliph in Islam, Muhammad's son-in-law, Ali, who was famous for his courage and had the nickname of *Esedullah* (God's Lion).

⁴ An allusion to the famous Battle of Bedr which is also related in the Qur'ān: *وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذْهَلَةٌ* *And Allah did certainly assist you at Bedr when you were weak* (the Qur'ān, 3:123).

O you Asaf, pillar of heroes, capable of instruction
Protector of the unfortunate, honorable vizier!

This man has come to your admired doorstep and he kisses it
He has sung a qaṣīda on the capture of Varad

Each was sung to have twenty tāriḥs
And each "miṣrā" is a complete tāriḥ, nothing to be added or taken

Although it is easy to praise you and it is to be expected
Most importantly, the ending is happy for the folks.

نقاد	رأى	اجمل	جهان	شمس	آصف
50	200	1	3	300	1
100	1	3	5	40	90
1	10	40	1	60	80
4		30	50		

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عباد	اسرار	مالك	دادكر	داور
70	1	40	4	4
2	60	1	1	1
1	200	30	4	6
4	1	20	20	200
	200		200	

1070

دول	زين	مه و	او	مكرم	سردار	يعنى
4	7	40	1	40	60	10
6	10	5	6	20	200	70
30	50	6		200	4	50
				40	1	10
					200	

1070

جهاد	رسم	اولوبن	نمودار	قلبنده	فص
3	200	1	50	100	80
5	60	6	40	30	90
1	40	30	6	2	
4		6	4	50	
		2	1	4	
		50	200	5	

1070

اولدی	همنام	لطیفی	علم	شیر	عزیز
1	5	30	70	300	70
6	40	9	30	10	7
30	50	10	40	200	10
4	1	80			7
10	40	10			

1070

علی	باشای	علی	المم	شان	سَداد
70	2	70	1	300	60
30	1	30	30	1	4
10	300	10	5	50	1
	1		40		4
	10		40		

1070

اولدی	فرماندیه	بجر	ویر	و مسعود دلا
1	80	2	6	6
6	200	8	2	40
30	40	200	200	60
4	1			70
10	50			6
	4			4
	5			4
				31

1070

بو	درروار	ایسه	قطب	وزراء	اجداد
2	4	1	100	6	1
6	200	10	9	7	40
	200	60	2	200	3
	6	5		1	1
	1			1	4
	200				

1070

قیلدی	توسیع	ممالکده	ابد	سعی	جمیل
100	400	40	1	60	3
10	6	40	2	70	40
30	60	1	4	10	10
4	10	30			30
10	70	20			
		4			
		5			

1070

ینه	کفار	ملاعینی	مدمر	برباد
10	20	40	40	2
50	80	30	4	200
5	1	1	40	2
	200	70	200	1
		10		4
		50		
		10		

1070

جند	ارواح	مقدسه	عجب	نهج	ایتدی
3	1	40	70	50	1
50	200	100	3	5	10
4	6	4	2	3	400
	1	60			4
	8	30			10
		5			

1070

ملك	اردلده	اولان	حصن	حصینی	او	کشاد
40	1	1	8	8	1	20
30	200	6	90	90	6	300
20	4	30	50	10		1
	30	1		50		4
	4	50		10		
	5					

1070

بويله	بر عالی	همم	انجق	اولور	از وزرا
2	2	5	1	1	1
6	200	40	50	6	7
10	70	40	3	30	6
30	1		100	6	7
5	30			200	200
	10				1

1070

حسن	بال	ایله	اوله	نایل	مفتاح	وراد
8	2	1	1	50	40	6
60	1	10	6	1	80	200
50	30	30	30	10	400	1
	5	5	5	30	1	4
				8		

1070

بارك	الله	تعالی	بقدم	حسن
2	1	400	2	8
1	30	70	100	60
200	30	1	4	50
20	5	30	5	
		10	40	

1070

صانه	الحق	عن	العيب	الی	يوم	تناد
90	1	70	1	1	10	400
1	30	50	30	30	6	50
50	8		70	10	40	1
5	100		10			4
			2			

1070

سِر	اعدايه	اوره	سيفنى	هر	دمده	آلوب
60	1	1	60	5	4	1
200	70	6	10	200	40	30
	4	200	80		4	6
	1	5	50		5	2
	10		10			
	5					

1070

آجه	ابواب	غزايه	ابدا	باب	جهاد
1	1	1000	1	2	3
3	2	7	2	1	5
5	6	1	4	2	1
	1	10	1		4
	2	5			

1070

مدحيا	اول	دز	زيبايه	مورخ	نازك
40	1	4	7	40	50
4	6	7	10	6	1
8	30		2	200	7
10			1	600	20
1			10		
			5		

1070

باد	اين	جهد	مبارك	وزهي	فتح	وراد
2	1	3	40	6	80	6
1	10	5	2	7	400	200
4	50	4	1	5	8	1
			200	10		4
			20			

1070

From all the above, it is safe to conclude that we came across another Bosniak poet, and a very good one, which must have had, this poem being a clear proof of that, his own collection of poems, which is the fact future researchers must not oversee.

The capture of the Varad fortress was an event of paramount importance, which is substantiated by this *tārīḥ-poem* and the way in which it was composed. The poet Madḥī presented himself in this *tārīḥ-poem* as an exceptional artist, a true virtuoso. In fact, he is the only poet of ours we know of who proved his poetic skills and achievements in composing the *tārīḥ* in this way.

PJESNIK ISHAK TELALOVIĆ IZ LIVNA
I NJEGOV TARIH O OSVOJENJU VARADA

SAŽETAK

U radu je predstavljena pjesma – tarih koju je ispjevao pjesnik Ishak Telalović iz Livna povodom osvojenja tvrđave Varad od strane serdara Ali-paše 1070/1659-60. Pjesma ima deset bejtova, a svaki stih-misra predstavlja tarih koji daje godinu 1070.

S obzirom na autora koji je do sada bio skoro nepoznat, događaj povodom koga je pjesma ispjevana, a posebno s obzirom na način kako je ispjevana, pjesma predstavlja vrlo zanimljivo otkriće visokog književnog dometa u žanru tariha.

Uz faksimil originala koji se čuva u Bošnjačkom institutu u Cirihu (No 142, list 14b) u radu se donosi transliteracija teksta turskom latinicom, prijevod pjesme na engleski jezik, te grafički prikaz brojčane vrijednosti svih dvadeset tariha.

THE POET ISHAK TELALOVIĆ OF LIVNO
AND HIS TARIH ON THE CONQUEST OF THE VARAD FORTRESS

SUMMARY

The paper brings a poem – a *tārīh* – written by the poet Ishak Telalović of Livno on the occasion of the conquest of the Varad Fortress by the Serdar Ali-Pasha 1070 H./1659/60 A.D. The poem has ten bayts, and each verse – misra' is a *tārīh* which gives the year 1070.

With regard to the fact that the author has been almost unknown, the event on the occasion of which it was written, and particularly with regard to the way it was written, the poem is a remarkable discovery of high literary achievement in the tarih genre.

Along with the facsimile of the original which is kept in the Bosniak Institute in Zürich (No. 142, p. 14b), the paper also brings transliteration of the text in Turkish Latin alphabet, its English translation, and a Chart with numerical values of all the 20 tarihs.