

HISTORIANS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE  
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## CĀBĪ °ÖMER

(b. 1750s; d. 1814?)

## LIFE

Except for the short entry in Bursalı Mehmed Tâhir's *°Osmānlı Mü'ellifleri*, there is no record of C.°Ö. in biographical and bibliographical sources.<sup>1</sup> The place and date of C.°Ö.'s birth is unknown. If we assume that he was middle aged when he wrote his *Ta'rih* in 1203/1789, we may conclude that he must have been born in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the lack of information on C.°Ö., many scholars have referred to him erroneously as Cābī Sa°id and his work as *Cābī Sa°id Ta'rihi* instead of *Cābī Ta'rihi*.<sup>2</sup> Ahmed Hamdi Tanpınar made another mistake regarding the name of the author. A note on the inside cover of the Istanbul University manuscript calls the work *Cābī Sa°id'in Ta'rihi*, but Tanpınar, who used this copy as a source, refers to the work as *Cābī °İsmet Bey Ta'rihi* in *19. Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, the first edition of which appeared in 1942.<sup>3</sup> Although the origin of the name "Sa°id" is unknown, it certainly has nothing to do with the author, whose name is recorded as "Cābī-yi Ayasofya °Ömer Efendi" on fol. 278a. Thus, the attributions to "Sa°id" and to "Cābī °İsmet Bey" are unfounded. Fol. 379a of the autograph copy (Esad Efendi 2152) records °Ömer Efendi's name and official title written by a different hand.

Some of the information on C.°Ö.'s life comes from explicit statements and clues in his work. C.°Ö. notes several times that he lived in Üsküdar. For example, he ascribes the warm welcome he received from Seyyid Feyzullāh Efendi, the viceroy (*nā'ib*) of Saqız (Chios), and his retinue during his exile on that island to the fact that they were both from Üsküdar.<sup>4</sup> C.°Ö. had been sent to exile in Saqız for his illegal correspondences concerning a house with disputed *waqf* status located in Istanbul-Ortaköy. His life in exile began on 7 Safar 1225/14 March 1810 and ended after three months on 5 Jumada I 1225/8 June 1810, when he returned to Istanbul either upon the completion of his sentence or with a pardon.<sup>5</sup>

C.°Ö. appears to have had many friends in bureaucratic circles who helped him compile accurate records of various *fermāns* and imperial decrees (*ḥaṭṭ-ı hümayūn*). Although he generally refers to them as summaries (*me'al*), comparisons with official chronicles establish these documents as verbatim copies of the originals. The statesmen C.°Ö. mentions in his work must have allowed him to consult these documents. For example, his cordial conversation with Mehmed Rāğib Efendi, who held the office of *defterdār* between 3 Shawwal 1223-26 Jumada I 1226/22 November 1808-12 June 1811, leaves the impression that they were close friends. During the fiscal crisis which began in Rajab 1224/August-September 1809, C.°Ö. was obliged to pay a due of 3000 *guruş* because of his title. When he met with *defterdār* Mehmed Rāğib to pay the money, however, he was able to reduce his share to 1500 *guruş*.<sup>6</sup> The author was the tax collector of the Ayasofya district (*Ayasofya cābiligī*), but scholars