THE EVALUATION OF THE WORDS TÜRK-ETRAK, KÜRD-EKRAD AS THE APPEAR IN THE OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS

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The various words and terms used in the Ottoman archival documents most of the times have connotations that differ from their actual meaning. One, therefore, should use such words and terms that are vital for making research on the social life in the Ottoman Empire carefully. Otherwise grave mistakes can not be avoided in carrying out such researches.

The words of this type such as *Türk* and its plural *Etrak* and *Kürd* and its plural *Ekrad* used in various figurative meanings in the Ottoman documents. One often comes across the words mentioned above in the Ottoman archival documents, in particular in the *Tahrir Defters* that have very important statistical information, and in the *kanunnames*. I hope our evaluation on these words will set an example for researches on other similar terms and words.

We already know that the non-tax-paying subjects of the Ottoman society termed "*askerî*". The *Tahrir Defters* fully recorded the most important source of income for the state treasury namely the tax-paying "*re'aya*", regardless of their belief or ethnic origin. These *Defters* also recorded the heads of the households as well as the non-married adult males along with their fathers' names, their professions and trades, the names of the city or town, quarter, or village they live in, their products and the taxes they pay on them, their ethnic origin and religion, whether they were nomads or settled. We also find information on the *vakıfs* and the architectural monuments in these *Defters*. Therefore, it is vital that anyone carrying out research on the social and economic history of the Ottoman Empire should consult these *Defters*. However, the researcher, for the sake of a sound research, must pay a great attention to the various terms and in particular the local usage's when using these *Tahrir Defters* that also include local terminology.

The word "*Türk* " or its plural "*Etrak* " as mentioned above most of the time used figuratively with connotation that differed from its actual meaning. For instance in the *kanunname* of Mehmet, the Conqueror[1], the word "*Türk*" in the phrase "*Eğer biregü hamr içse, Türk veya şehirli olsa* ..." means villager or nomad rather than indicating ethnic origin while the word "*şehirli*" means the local. Otherwise, the phrase should have run as "...*Türk veya gayr-i Muslim olsa*..." (Turk or non-Muslim) or "...*köylü ve şehirli olsa*..." (villager or townsman). Likewise when the captives called "*Pençik oğlanı*" were selected for the Jannissary corps the phrase "*Bunları Türk'e virelüm. Hem Müslüman olsunlar, hem Türkçe öğrensinler*" was used[2]. The phrase "*Türk'e verilmeli*..." (to be given to a Turk), used here as well as in the *Kavanin-i Yeniçeriyan*, likewise mean a villager or a nomad and not a townsman[3]. We also find the term "*Türk*" used as adjective for some villages. For instance the village of Hacılu of the Kızuçan *nahiye* recorded in the 1518 *Tahrir Defter* of the *sancak* of Çemişgezek added with the word "*Türk*". Also the term "*İslamî Türk*" used after Kergah, one of the villages of the *nahiye* of Keban again in the *sancak* of Çemişgezek. Likewise the villages of Ribat and Haydi defined with the word "*Etrak*"[4] (See Appendix 1). Also in these phrases the words *Türk* and *Etrak* have no ethnic connotation. We never come across such terms, although there are many *Turkish* and *Turkoman* tribes and towns in the region. The Ottoman scribes had never described the Turkish elements with the word "*Türk*" while they had always referred to the non-Muslims with their ethnic identity such as *Ermeni* (Armenian), *Rum* (Greek), *Yahudi* (Jew), and *Süryani* (Syriac). Ethnically the word "*Türk*" included within the phrase "...*re'aya ki müslümanlardır*...". It is only when the terms "*reaya-yı Etrak*" and "*reaya-yı zimmî* " used together, that appear in the *sancak kanunnames*, the word *Etrak* may have the ethnic connotation. In fact the the terms "*reaya-yı Etrak*" and "*reaya-yı zimmî*" used together in the *kanunname* of the *sancak* of Sis in referring to the collection of "*resm-i hane* "[5] (See Appendix II). Here the term "*reaya-yı Etrak*" refers to the Muslims while "*reaya-yı zimmî*" refers to the non-Muslims

[1] See Ö.L. Barkan, *XV ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları*, İstanbul 1943, p. 387.

[2] See Neşrî, *Kitâb-ı Cihan-nümâ*, ed. F. Reşit Unat-M. A. Köymen, Ankara 1987, pp. 198-199.

[3] See Süleymaniye Esad Efendi Library, nu. 2068, 5b.

[4] See BA, TD. nu. 64, p. 783.

[5] See BA, Tahrir Defteri (TD), nu. 69, p. 664; TD, nu. 450, p. 838; TD, nu. 178, p. 3.

that includes Greeks, Armenians, Jews and other non-Muslim ethnic groups. Likewise such terms used in the *kanunnames* of the province of Çukurabad[6] and the *sancak* of Özer[7] have exactly the same connotations (See Appendix III).

The term *"Ekrad zulmü"* in *"Vilayet-i mezburede sabıkda Ekrad zulmünden nice reaya perakende olup..."*, the phrase recorded in the 1541 *kanunname* of Çemişgezek, mean the atrocity of the nomads rather than that of the Kurds[8] (See Appendix IV). In fact the state considered these atrocious acts committed against the settled people and the harms done to their crops by the nomads due to the lack of central authority in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries as a great injustice committed against the settled people. Therefore, the Ottoman government imposed on these tribes who were responsible from such acts, forced settlements in the areas, outside Anatolia, such as in Cyprus, Syria and Rakka[9]. Also the term *"Ekrad adeti"* in *"vilayet-i mezburede alınan Ekrad adeti..."*, the phrase recorded in the 1566 *kanunname* of Çemişgezek, used in place of *"resm-i hane"*[10]. This fact is fully clear from the phrase *"Vilayet-i mezburede şimdiye değin alınıgelen Ekrad adeti ki resm-i hane deyü..."* recorded in the *kanunname* of Bitlis province[11]. Likewise the term *"Kürdistan hükmünde"* in *"Ve vilayet-i mezbure şimdiye değin Kürdistan hükmünde olup, defter ahvalin bilmedikleri ecilden..."*[12], the phrase recorded in Çemişgezek *kanunname*, refers to geographical location rather than political, and therefore means "mountainous area, an area that the government cannot reach". We do know that this area formerly was under the administration of Akkoyunlus, descendants of Bayındır line of Oğuz. The Ottomans carried out several surveys in the region after it had passed into their hands. Tur Ali Bey, the Beg of Siverek, first mentioned as "Akkoyunlu" in one of these registers, recorded several years later as *"Ekrad*

[6] BA, TD, nu. 998, p. 302.

[7] BA, TD, nu. 1023, p. 1.

[8] BA, TD, nu. 213, pp. 17-18.

[9] For further details see Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Aşiretleri İskân Teşebbüsü*, İstanbul 1963; Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda İskân Siyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleşmesi*, Ankara 1991.

[10] See Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 106, pp. 2-3.

[11] See Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 109, p. 1; also see Ö.L.Barkan, *Kanunlar*, p. 192.

[12] Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-i Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 164, p. 2.

beyi" [13]. Indeed in the province of Diyarbekir today many people who think of themselves as of Kurdish origin claim that the Akkoyunlu state was a Kurdish one[14].

One of the best examples that the term *Ekrad* and *Kürd* do not refer to an ethnic origin is the term *"Ekrad-ı Döğerlü"* used for a group of people that had lived in the province of Urfa and who were actually the descendant of Döğer, one of the tribes of twenty-four Oğuz clans[15] (See Appendix V). Here the word *Ekrad*, just like the word *Etrak* must mean nomads[16]. Döğer tribe together with its marks cited within the list of Oğuz clans by Reşidüddin[17], Kaşgarlı Mahmud[18] and Yazıcıoğlu[19]. Likewise it is a fact that the *"Kürd Atlu"* clan of Bertiz tribe is purely of Turkish origin and has no other ethnic background despite the epithet *"Kürd"* [20] (See Appendix VI). We do come across the epithet *"Kürd"* used before or after the names of Turkish tribes, but we have no clear explanation for their usage in such a way. *"Kürd Mihmadlu"* clan of Dulkadirid Dokuz (= Beşanlu) tribe is one of the good examples for such a usage[21] (See Appendix VII). The same clan had a sub-branch called *"Küçük Kürd Mihmadlu"*. Likewise İzzeddinlü clan[22], so named after their *Kethüda* İzzeddin Bey, recorded in some documents as *"Ekrad-ı İzzeddinlü"* despite the fact they mentioned as Bozulus *Turkoman* in the sources[23] (See Appendix VIII). The main reason

[13] See Nejat Göyünç, *XVI. Yüzyılda Mardin Sancağı*, Ankara 1991, p. 41, 80; Nejat Göyünç, "Türk-Kürd İlişkileri Hakkında", *Türk Kültürü*, nu. 346, Ankara 1992, p. 66.

[14] See Nejat Göyünç, "Türk-Kürd İlişkileri Hakkında", p. 66.

[15] Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-i Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 965, p. 165a; also see, Mühimme Defteri, nu. 99, p. 54, decree 186.

[16] For further details on this subject see Nejat Göyünç, "XVI. Yüzyılda Doğu ve Güney-Doğu Anadolu'da Yönetim ve Nüfus", *Türk Kültürü Dergisi*, nu. 370, Ankara 1994, pp. 85-86.

[17] *Câmi'ü't-tevârih*, ed. Berezin, Petersburg 1858, pp. 32-38.

[18] *Dîvânu Lugâti't-Türk*, trs. Besim Atalay, İstanbul 1936, I, pp. 58-59.

[19] *Târih-i Âl-i Selçuk*, Topkapı Palace Library, Revan nu. 1390, pp. 21-24.

[20] BA, TD, nu. 402, p. 321.

[21] BA, TD, nu. 402, pp. 219-220, 274.

[22] The inhabitants of Halife village of Kızılağaç town in the province of Edirne - when they were asked to pay taxes as the descendents of İzzeddinlü clan of Bozulus Turkoman from Karaman- they declared that their forefathers were from Bozulus Turkoman and that they had been residing in this place for eighty year and had paid their taxes (BA, Cevdet catalogue, Dahiliye section, nu. 6425).

[23] See *Ruznamçe*, p. 27. Also it was recorded as "*Cemaat-i Hâlidlü, tâbi-i Gerger. an Ekrâd-ı İzzeddin Bey*" in the Tahrir Defter (See BA, TD, nu. 123, p. 442).

for this is that İzzeddin Bey was the beg of the *sancak* of *Ekrad*[24] (See Appendix IX). A group of these people in particular called *"Taife-i Ekrad-ı Okçu İzzeddinlü"* for they charged with making arrows, but on the other hand they defined as *"Türkmen Ekradı"*. Likewise the nomadic tribe so called *"Kabail-i Rışvan"* or *"Ekrad-ı Rışvan"*, who pass the summer and winter traveling in an area that stretches from Aleppo to Kastamonu, also named *"Türkmen Ekrad"*[25]. Here also the word Ekrad does not have an ethnic connotation for we find in the sources the use of both *"Ekrad-ı Türkmenan"* and *"Türkman-ı Ekrad"*[26] (See Appendix X). Literary these two terms would mean Torkoman Kurds or Kurdoman Turks respectively and this would bring to our mind the understanding of Turkocised Kurd or Kurdicised Turks. However, such an interpretation would be a grave mistake, because the use of these two words together in this way is impossible. Therefore, here also the word *Ekrad* must mean nomad or mountaineer. Even the Bektaşlu tribe of Karaisalu in Çukurova called *"Türkman Ekrad"*[27]. Here also the word *Ekrad* must mean nomad or mountaineer. We also come across two clans named *Karaca Kürd*[28] and *Kürd Mehmedlü*[29], descendants of Boynu İncelu Turkoman tribe, partly living in Kırşehir and partly in Nevşehir and its villages (See Appendix XI). Both of these groups still live in Kırşehir and Nevşehir provinces. Apart from these there were *Kürd* Hasan-oğulları clan[30] of Bozulus Turkoman settled in Belenli-burun pass (derbend) in the province of Karaman in 1760, and *Kürd Tekedu* (?) clan of Danişmend Turkoman settled in Kütahya had no other ethnic origin than Turkish despite the fact they had epithet Kurd[31] (See Appendix XII). When the Ottomans defeated before the walls of Vienna in 1683, they started recruiting auxiliary forces from various tribes including the Turkoman tribes of Yeni-il and Aleppo. There were among these *Turkoman* tribes one clan

[24] In the sources with regard to this usage we come across the following phrase: *"Kabâil-i Rışvan, tâbi-i Kahta an reâyâ-yı İzzeddin Bey. Mirlivâ-i Ekrâd"* (BA, TD, nu. 123, p. 441).

[25] See BA, TD, nu. 71, p. 252-253; TD, nu. 123, p. 428.

[26] Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 997, p. 344.

[27] Tapu-Kadastro Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 114, p. 171a (1572).

[28] See BA, Maliyeden Müdevver Defters (MAD), nu. 8458, p. 306, year 1126; also see Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *XVIII. Yüzyılda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun İskân Siyaseti ve Aşiretlerin Yerleştirilmesi*, Ankara 1991, pp. 74-76.

[29] Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *idem*, p. 76; also see Ahmed Refik, *Anadolu'da Türk Aşiretleri*, İstanbul 1930, p. 77.

[30] See MAD, nu. 9956, p. 33.

[31] MAD, nu. 8458, p. 248.

called *"Kılıçlı Kürdü"* [32] (See Appendix XIII) and yet another settled in Hama and Homs called *"Ekrad-ı Kılıçlu"*[33] (See Appendix XIV). Likewise there were *"Kara Kürd"*, *"Kürd Mehmedlu"* and *"Şerbetli Kürdü"* clans within the Danişmend Turkomans settled around Aydın-Denizli[34] (Se Appendix XV).

We already know that the best organized group in Anatolia as a tribe (il veya ulus) was Kara koyunlu ulusu, Bozulus and Kara ulus. Of these Kara ulus described in a different way in the *kanunname* of Bozulus and as it is clear from the phrase: *"Kara ulus taifesi Ekrad ve müteferrik taife olup koyunları sayılmalu oldukda..."*[35] given the connotation *Ekrad*. No doubt the term *Ekrad* here also used to mean mountaineer or nomad. The Lek clan[36] recorded within the Bozulus Turkoman tribe in the *Tahrir Defter* number 200 carried out during the reign of Sultan Süleyman, the Legislator, and referred to as of Turkoman tribe in the phrase *"Havass-ı hümayunumdan Lek-Vanik nam Türkman taifesi arzuhal sunup askeri-islam için, bunlardan beş katar deve ve beşyüz re's koyun sürsat ferman olunmağla..."* recorded in a Mühimme document dated 30 July 1610[37]. However, the same tribe referred to as *"Ekrad ve Yürük taifesinden Lek cemaati..."* in another Mühimme document dated 19 March 1611[38]. Also the term *"Lekvanik Ekradı"* [39] used in another document dated January 1713. We find name of the begs such as Malkoç Bey, Deniz-oğlu, and Kızıl Koyunlu Halil Kethuda among the names of the tribal-chiefs of the same clan recorded in a Mühimme document dated 1690[40]. Likewise the term *"Türkman ve Ekraddan Receblü Afşarı cemaati..."* used for the clan Receblü Afşar which there is no doubt is a Turkoman tribe[41]. Also during the process of recruiting soldiers for the army in 1690 a side note *"Vesair Rum'dan olan*

[32] See BA, Mühimme Defter (MD), nu. 99, p. 50-52, decree 186; also see Ahmed Refik, *idem*, p. 86.

[33] See BA, MD, nu. 104, p. 112, decree 521; also see Ahmed Refik, *idem*, p. 107.

[34] See BA, MD, nu. 102, p. 208, decree 803; also see Ahmed Refik, *idem*, p. 104.

[35] See Ömer L. Barkan, *XV. ve XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ziraî Ekonominin Hukukî ve Malî Esasları, Kanunlar*, İstanbul 1943, p. 140.

[36] See BA, TD, nu. 200, p. 958.

[37] See Ahmed Refik, *idem*, p. 64.

[38] On being recorded as an Ekrad tribes that were part of the Kilis mukata'a see BA, MD, nu. 99, p. 48, decree 186; also see Ahmed Refik, *idem*, pp. 64-65.

[39] Ahmed Refik, *idem*, pp. 145-146.

[40] MD, nu. 99, p. 54, decree 186.

[41] Ahmed Refik, *idem*, p. 145.

Ekrad taifeleri ve Çorum kürdü ihtiyarları" was recorded for the Badıllı (=Beydili) tribal-chiefs of Turkomans of Yeni-il and Aleppo. The word *Ekrad* and *Kürd* used together here shows the similarity with the phrase *"Türk veya şehirli olsa"* as pointed out at the outset of this article[42]. In fact it is very clear that from these last examples that the term *Ekrad* used to mean nomad and that in particular the words Turkmen, *Kürd* and *Ekrad* have no ethnic connotation whatsoever.

The explanations given above are not only applicable to the words *Türk-Etrak, Kürd-Ekrad* but also some other words recorded in the Ottoman documents. For instance we find the ever often used Turkish names such as Durak, Evran, Küçük, Hızır, Aşık, Uğurlu, Emir, Balı, Çoban, Umur, Koçı, Sefer, Selman and Arslan among the Gebran (Christian) names recorded under Kazabad *nahiye* of Tokat province in the *Tahrir Defter* dated 961 A.H./ 1554/ A.D. and numbered 287[43]. These most probably were the Christian Turks brought from Rumelia during the era of Byzantine Empire (See Appendix XVII). Likewise the Christian groups such as Greeks, Syriac, and Nastorians living in South-Eastern Anatolia and Eastern Anatolia all recorded as "*cema'at-i Eramine*"[44]. Simeon, the Polish in his book of travels also points out that all the non-Muslims recorded as *eramine* although they were not all Armenians[45].

In conclusion, it is incumbent on the researches of history to interpret carefully, the terms and words –similar to the few examples given above– that had stemmed from the state's administrative system and understanding, as well as the local terminology in the Ottoman State. The Ottoman State founded a society fit to its system and administrative understanding without giving any damage to its structure. It is clear, therefore, from what has been written above, that the word *Ekrad* does not mean Kurds whatsoever and that such a consideration would be a grave mistake. We can only reach the true science of history and philosophy of history through considering such

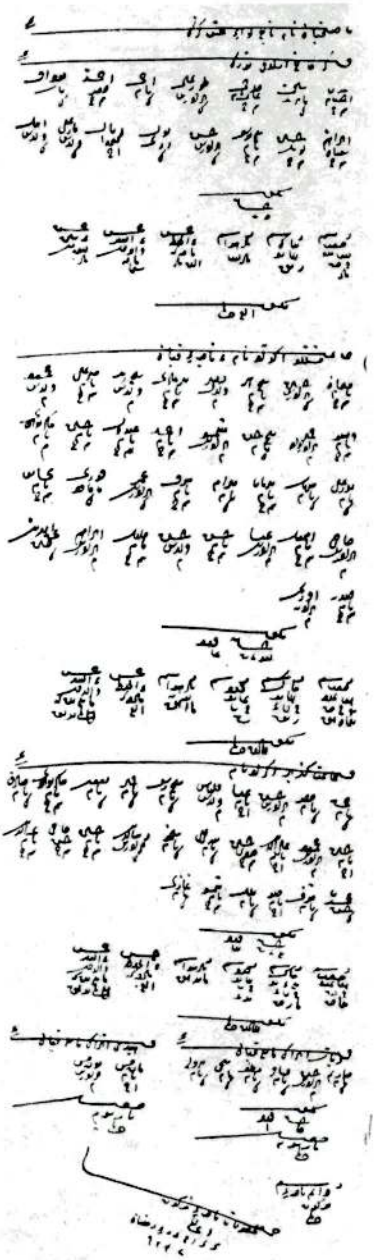
[42] MD, nu. 99, p. 56, decree 186.

[43] See BA, TD, nu. 287, p. 317-318.

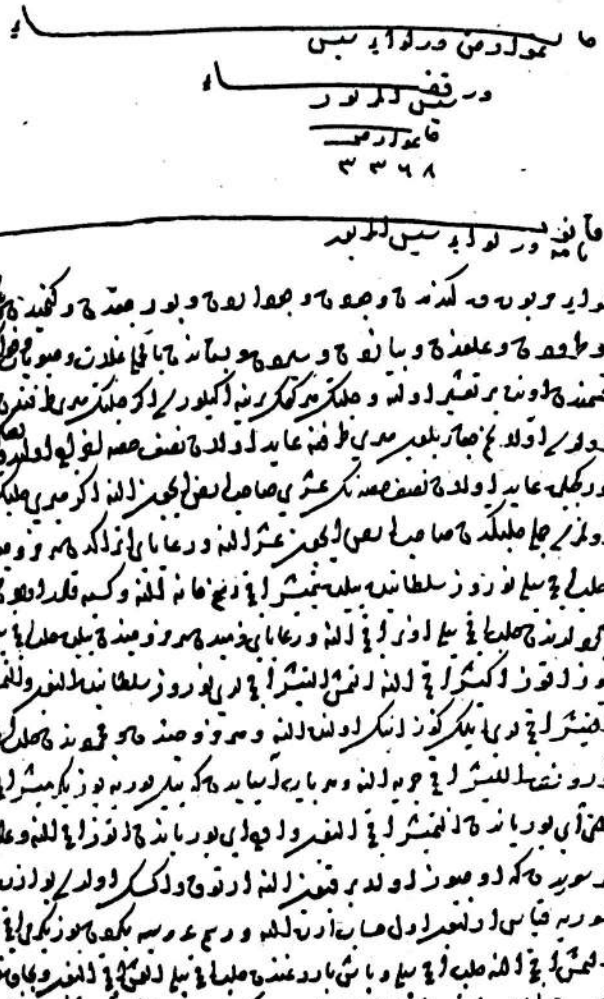
[44] See Nejat Göyünç, "XVI. Yüzyılda Doğu ve Güney-Doğu Anadolu'da Yönetim ve Nüfus", *Türk Kültürü Dergisi*, nu. 370, Ankara 1994, p. 84; also see Mehmet Ali Ünal, *XVI. Yüzyılda Harput Sancağı (1518-1566)*, Ankara 1989, p. 63.

[45] Polonyalı Siemon, *Polonyalı Simeon'un Seyahatnamesi*, 1608-1619, ed. Hrand Andreasyan, İstanbul 1964, p. 89.

matters. We also believe that the social, ethnic and cultural structure of Anatolia can only be determined and solved in this way.

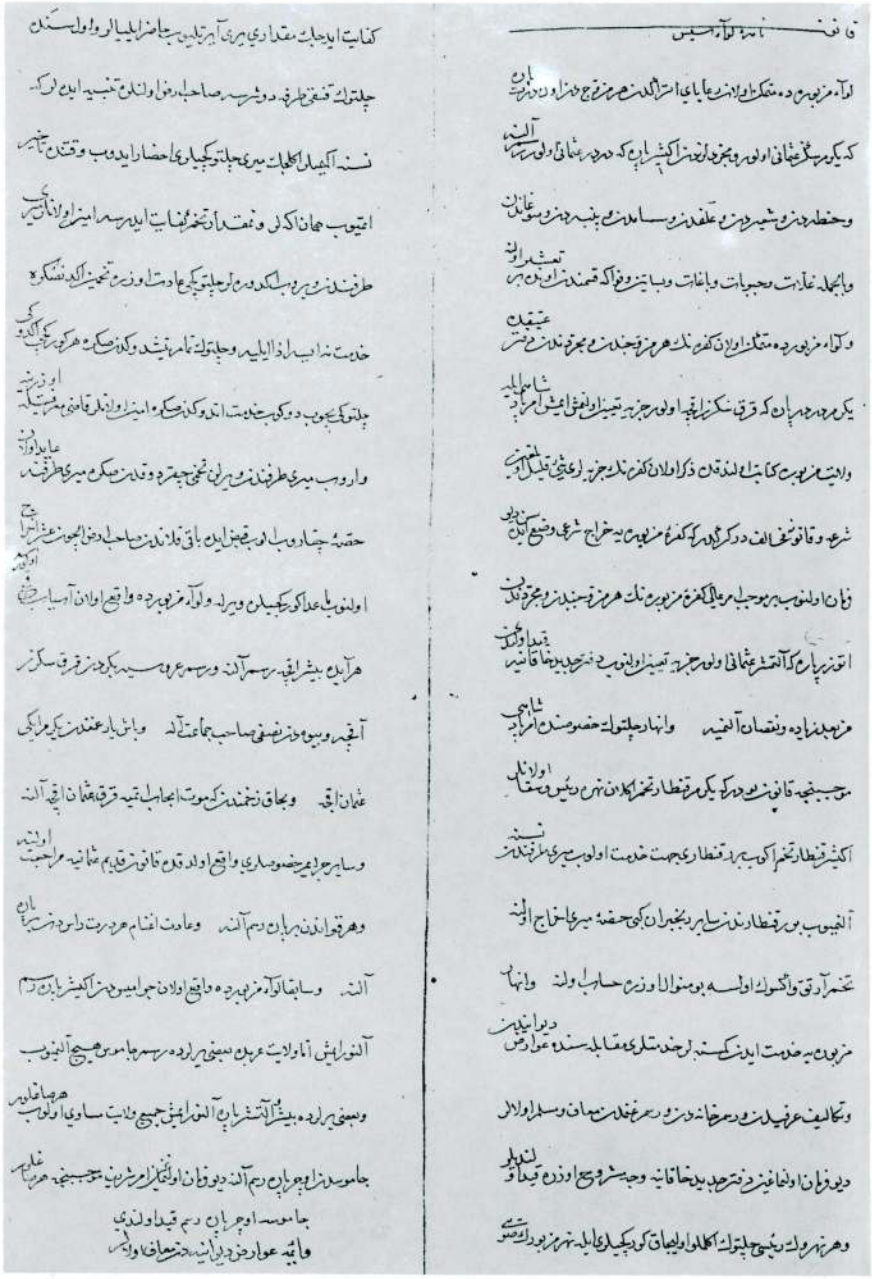


Ek. I - BA, TD, nr. 64, s. 783.
Appendix I - BA, TD, nu. 64, p. 783.



Ek. II - TD, nr. 450, s. 838.
Appendix II - TD, nu. 450, p. 838.

Ek. II - TD, nr. 69, s. 664.
Appendix II - TD, nu. 69, p. 664.



Ek. II - TD, nr. 178, s. 3-4.
Appendix II - TD, nu. 178, pp. 3-4.

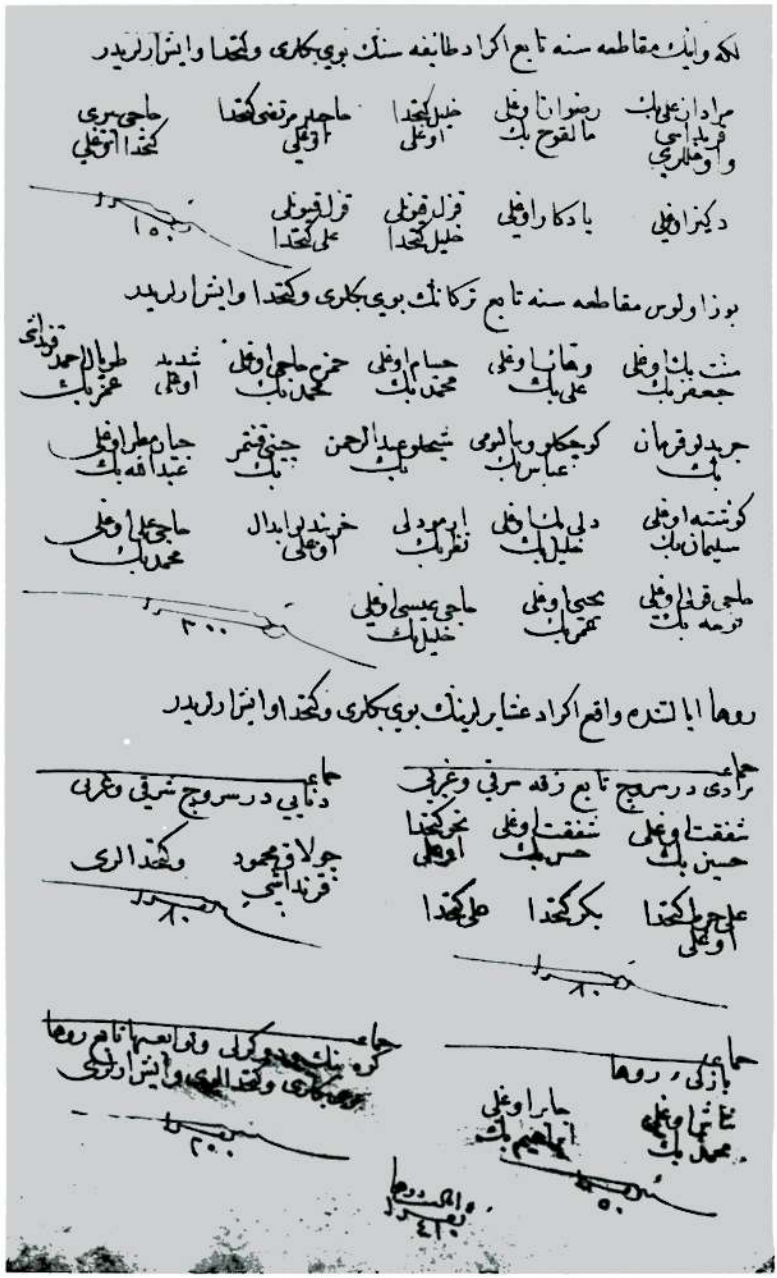
Ek. III - TD, nr. 1023, s. 1-2.
Appendix III - TD, nu. 1023, pp. 1-2.

(Ek. III'ün devamı)
(Continuation of Appendix III)

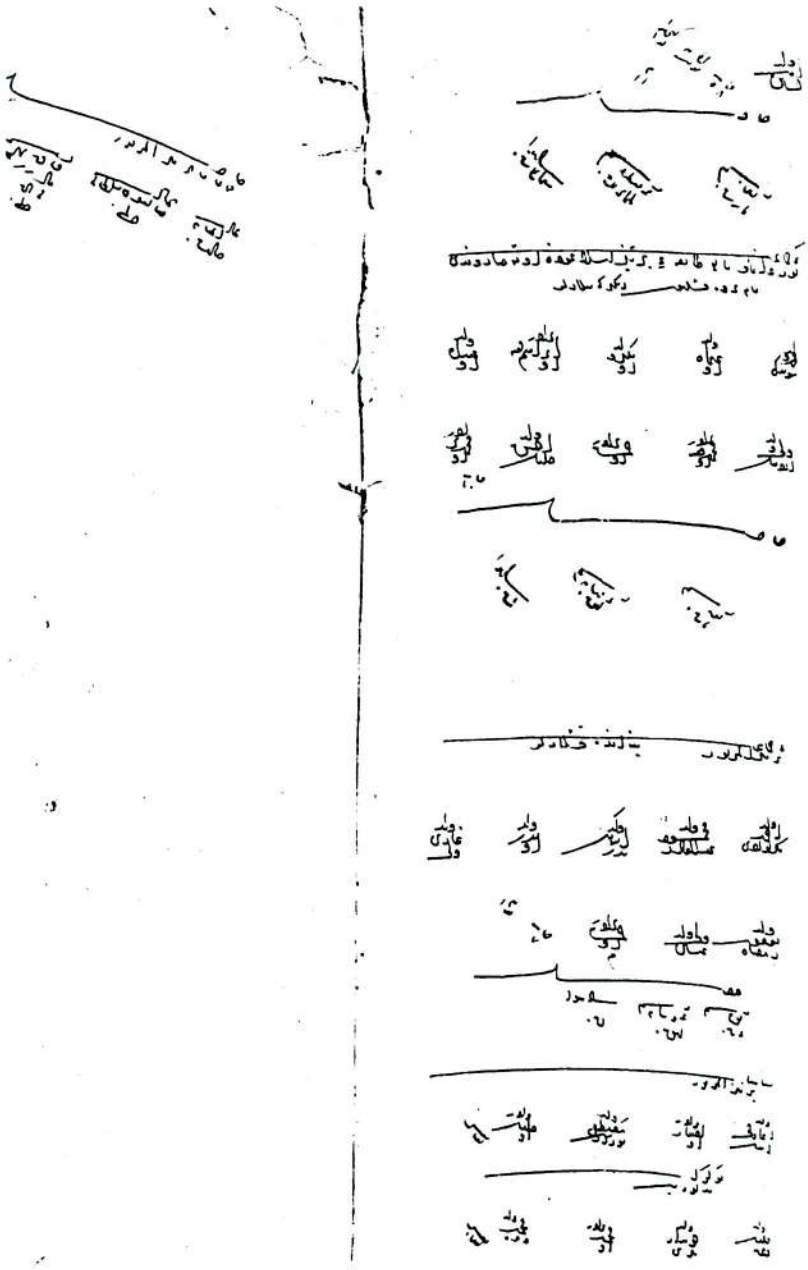
Ek. III - BA, TD, nr. 998, s. 302-303.
Appendix III - BA, TD, nu. 998, pp. 302-303.

Ek. IV - BA, TD, nr. 213, s. 17-18.
Appendix IV - BA, TD, nu. 213, pp. 17-18.

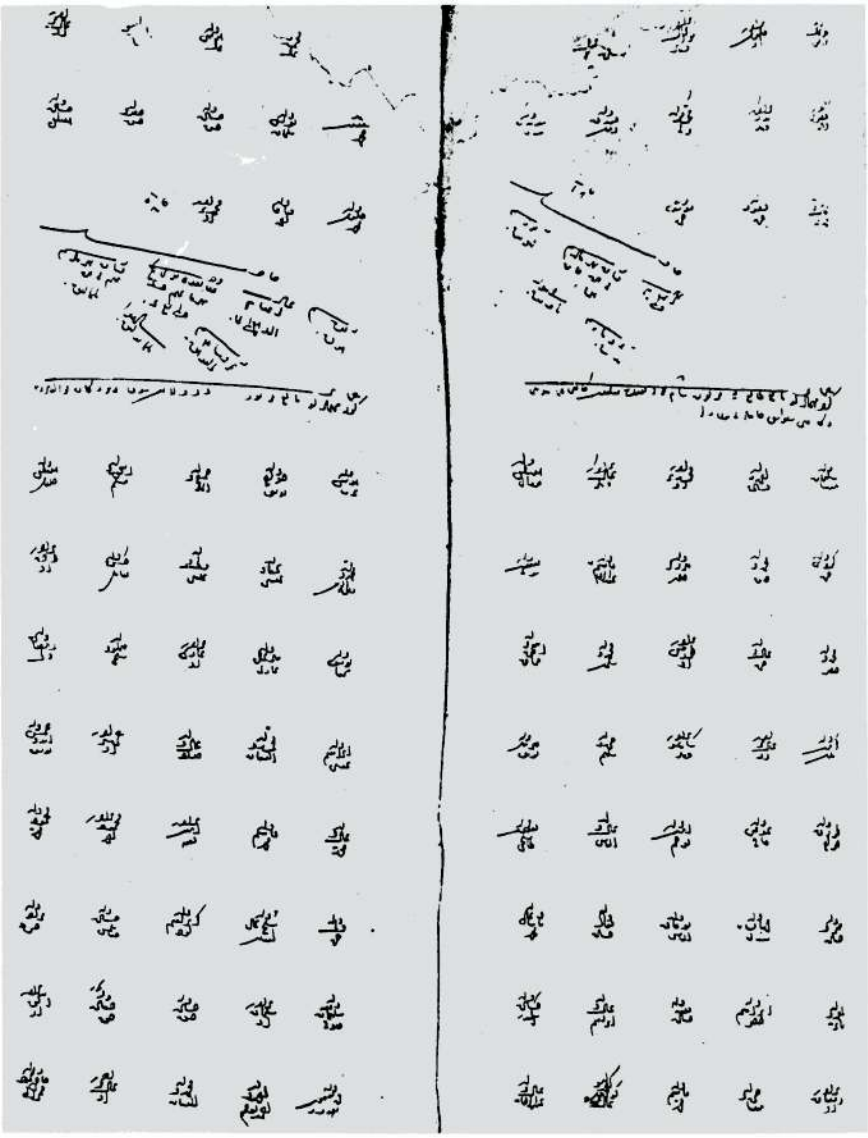
(Ek. IV'ün devamı)
(Continuation of Appendix IV)



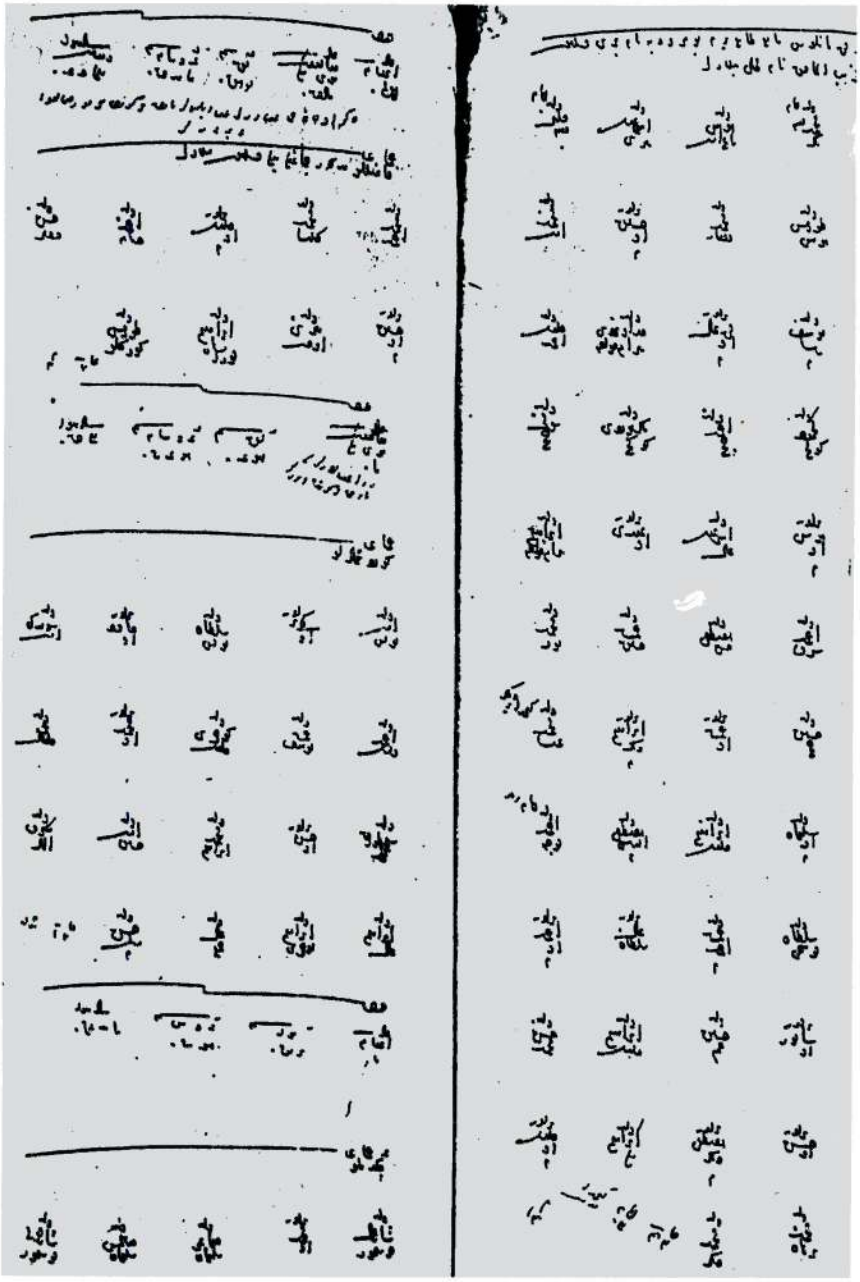
Ek. V - MD, nr. 99, s. 54, hüküm 186.
Appendix V - MD, nu. 99, p. 54, decree 186.



Ek. VI - BA, TD, nr. 402, s. 321.
Appendix VI - BA, TD, nu. 402, p. 321.



Ek. VII - TD, nr. 402, s. 219-220, 273-274.
Appendix VII - TD, nu. 402, pp. 219-220, 273-274.



(Ek. VII'nin devamı)
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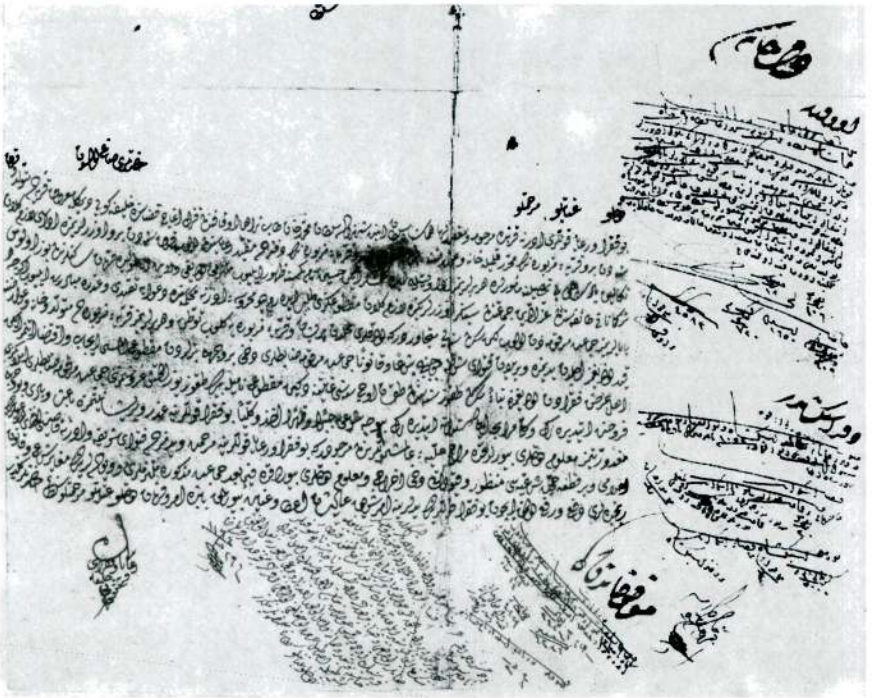
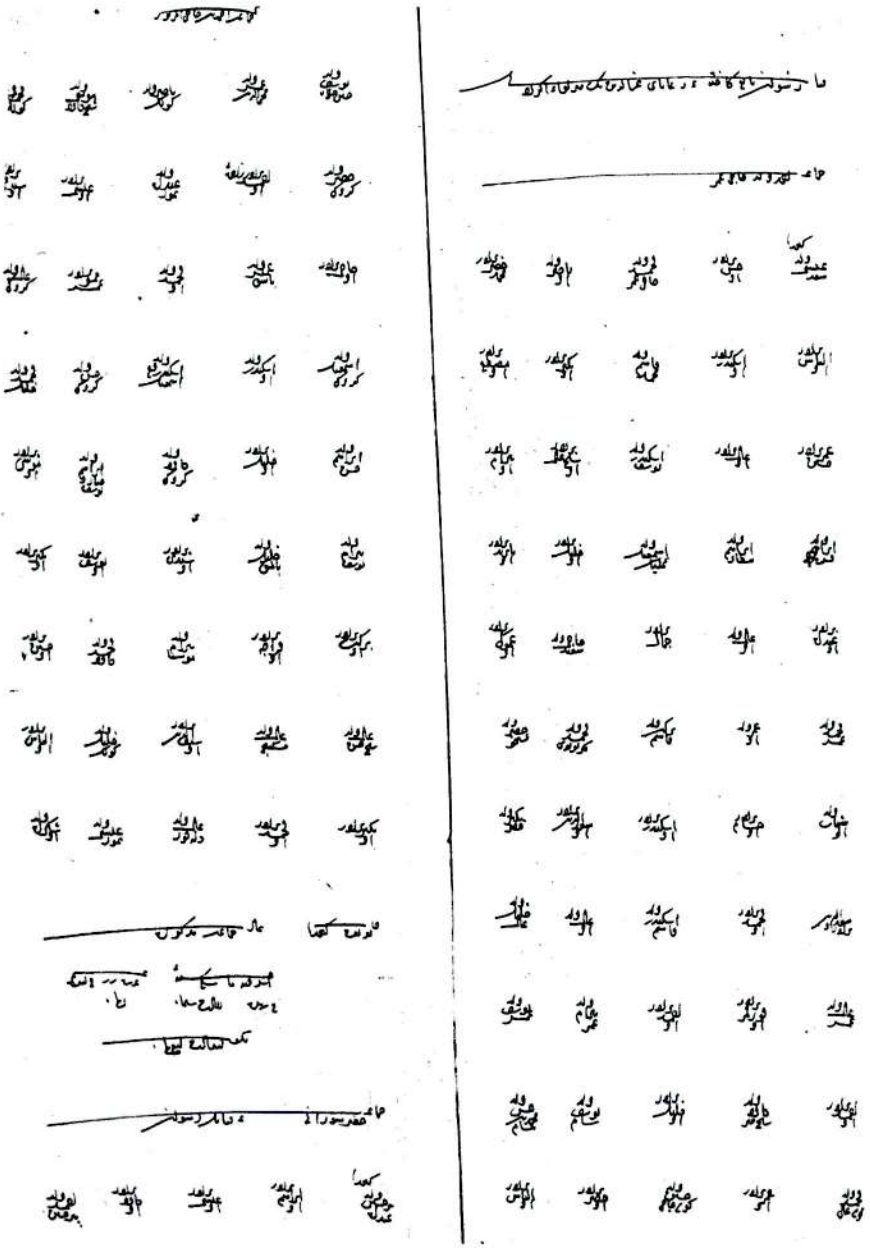
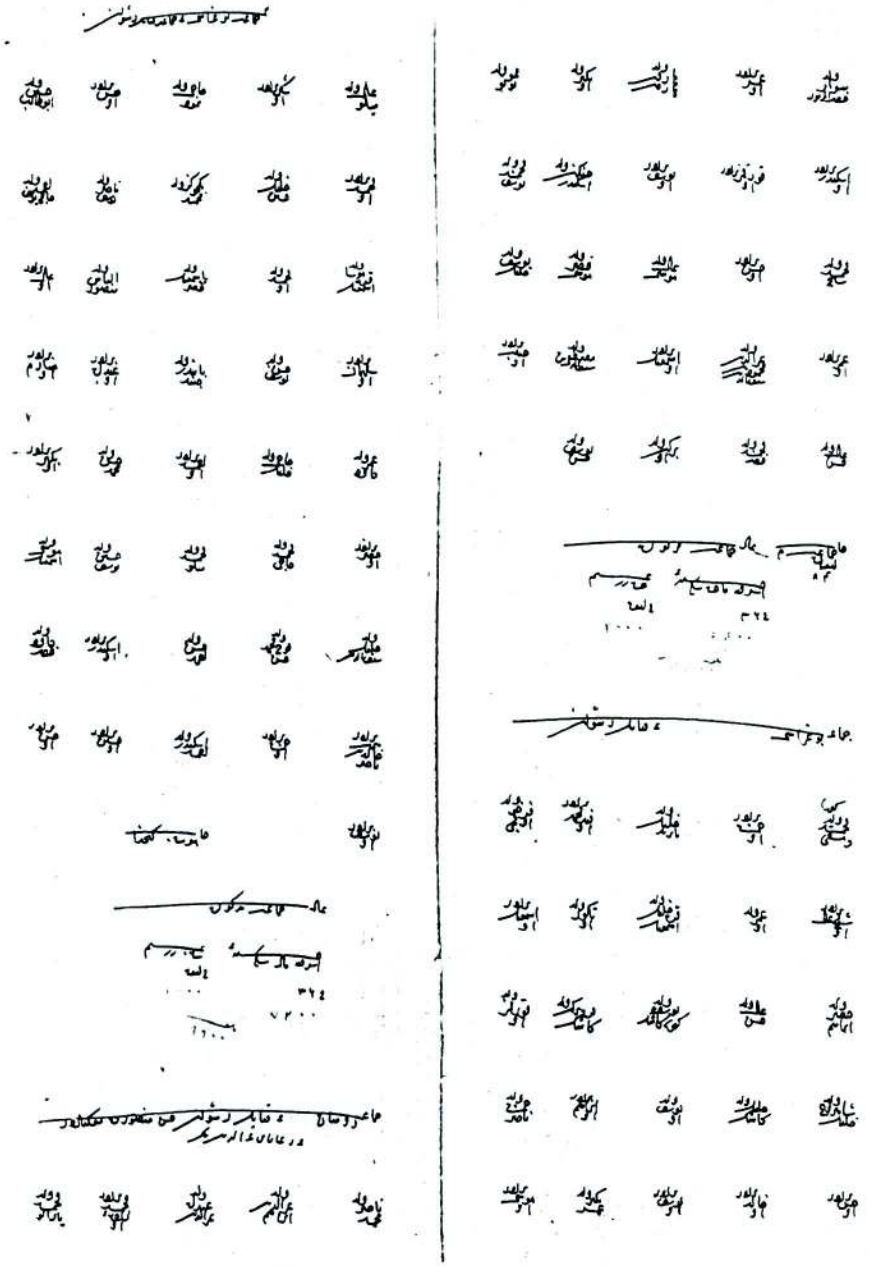


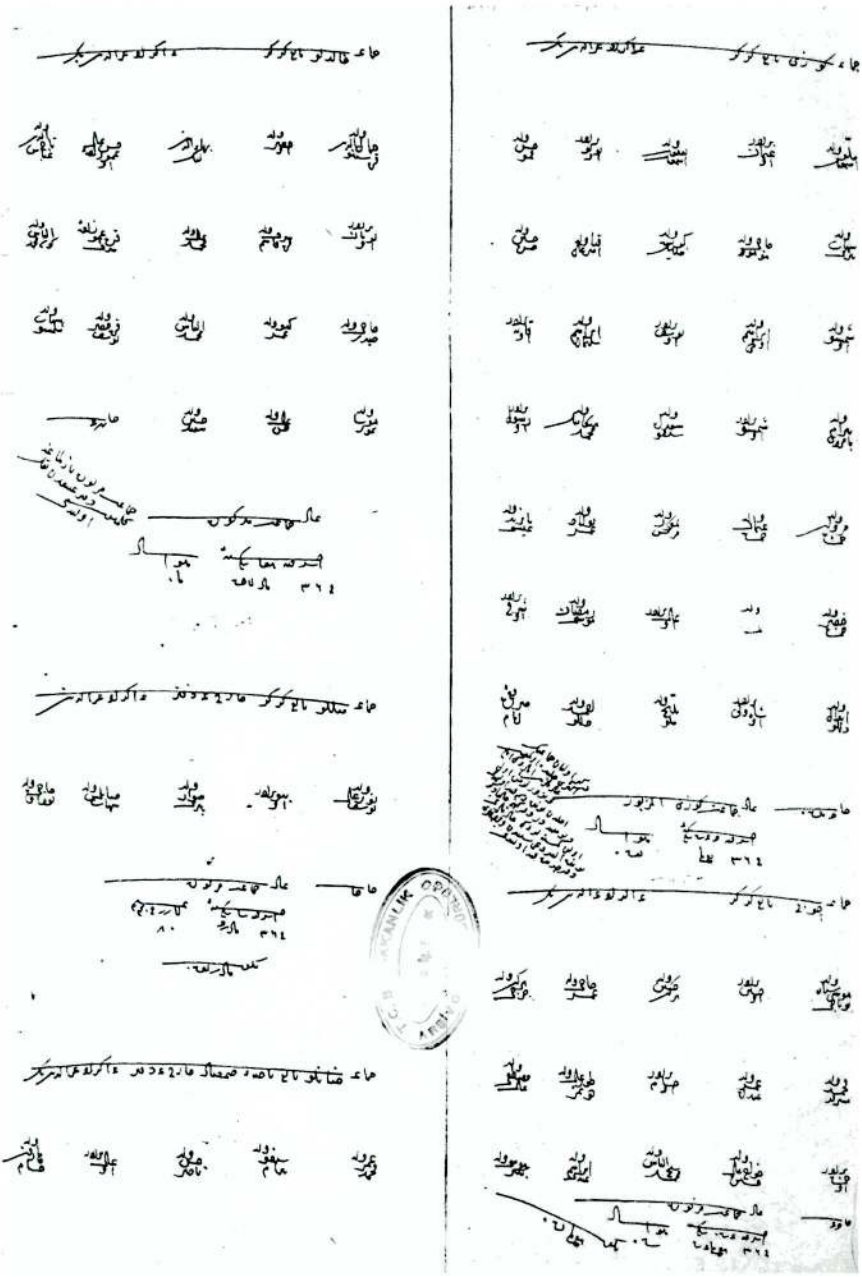
Ek. VIII - BA, Cevdet ts., Dahiliye ks., nr. 6425.
Appendix VIII - BA, Cevdet catalogue, Dahiliye section, nu. 6425.



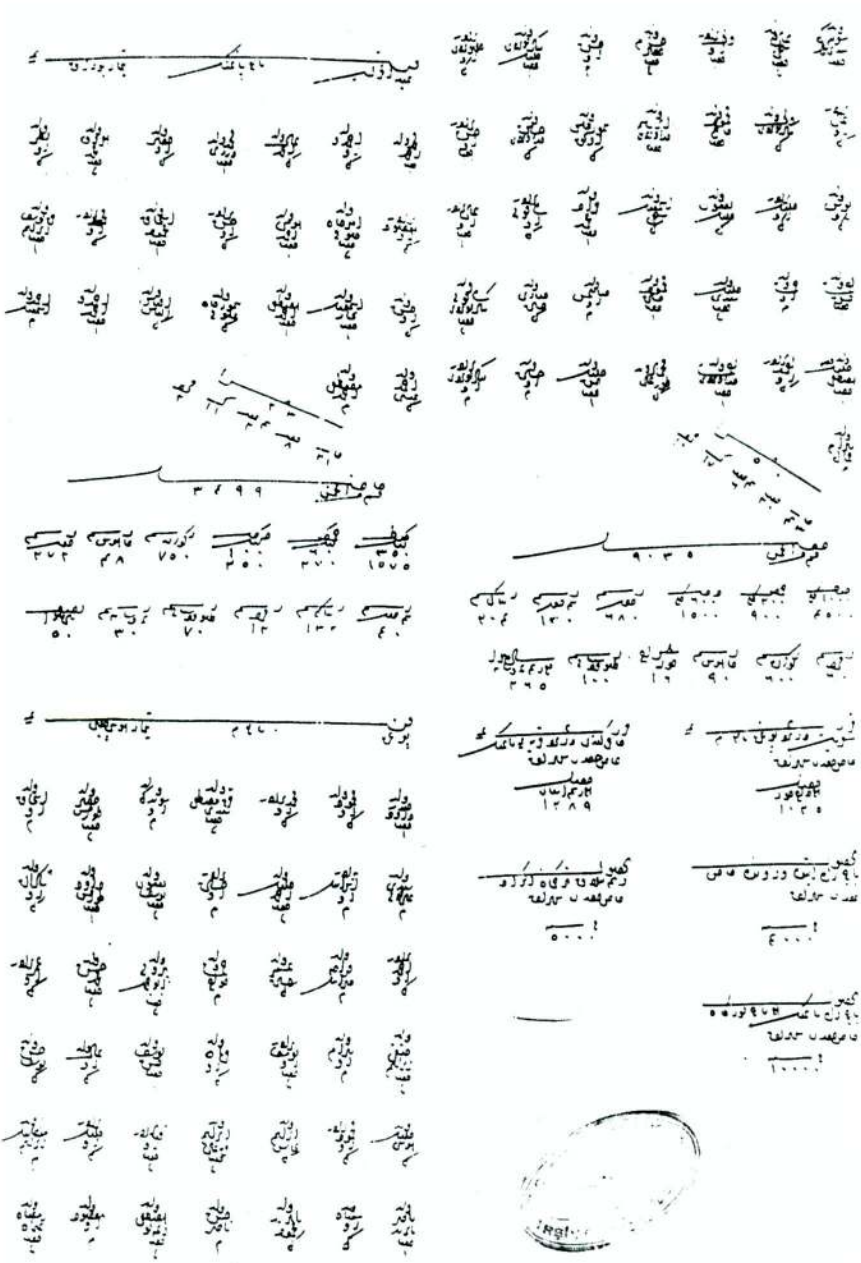
Ek. IX - BA, TD, nr. 123, s. 417-418.
Appendix IX - BA, TD, nu. 123, pp. 417-418.



Ek. IX - BA, TD, nr. 123, s. 427-428.
Appendix IX - BA, TD, nu. 123, pp. 427-428.

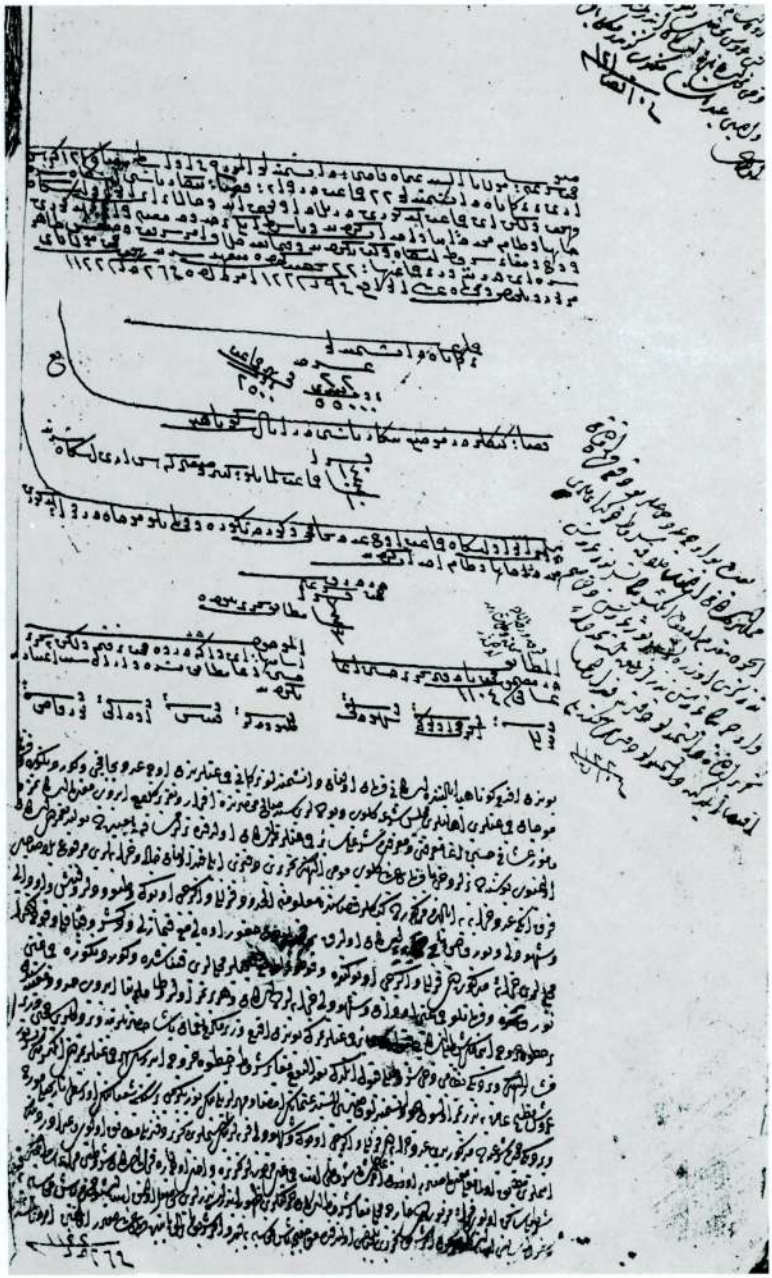


Ek. IX - BA, TD, nr. 123, s. 441-442.

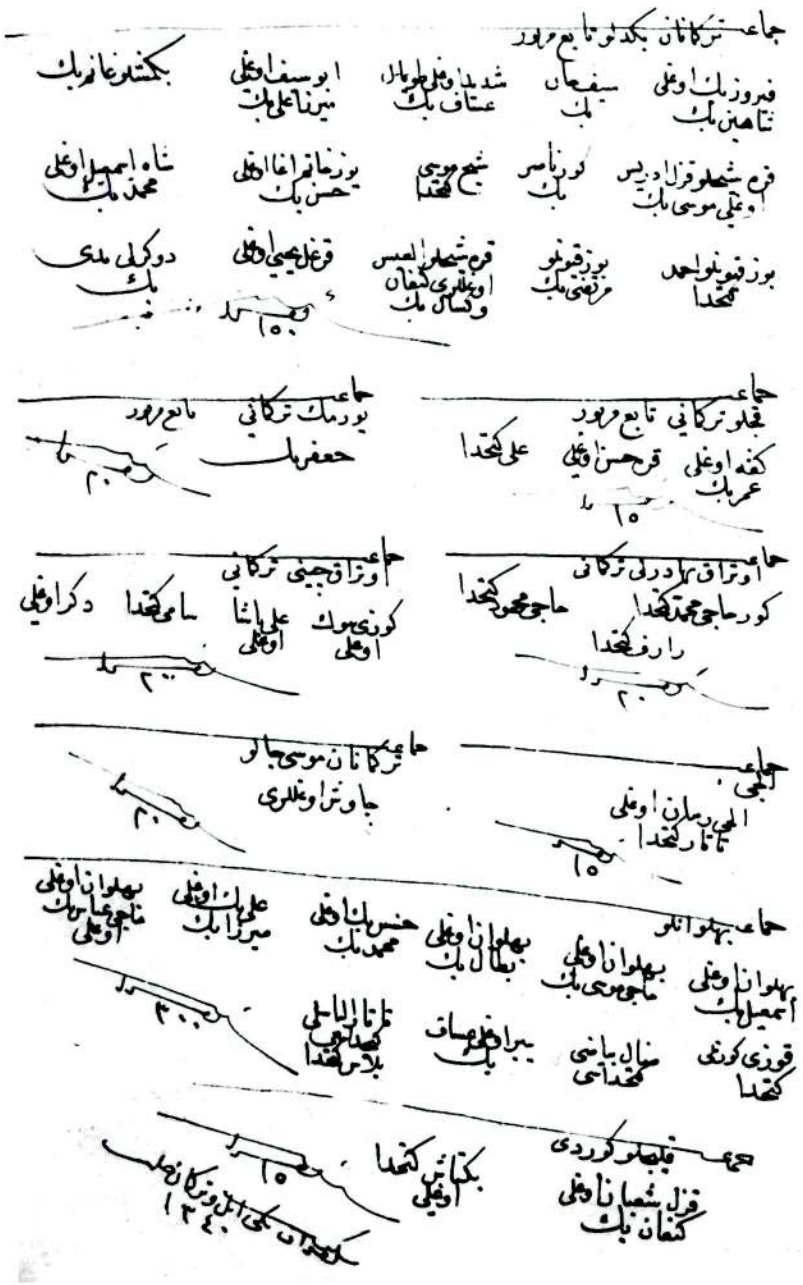


Ek X - Tapu-Kadastro, Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Arşivi, TD, nr. 997, s. 344-345.
Appendix X - Tapu-Kadastro, Kuyûd-ı Kadîme Archive, TD, nu. 997, pp. 344-345.

Ek. XI - BA, MAD, nr. 8458, s. 306.
Appendix XI - BA, MAD. nu. 8458, p. 306.



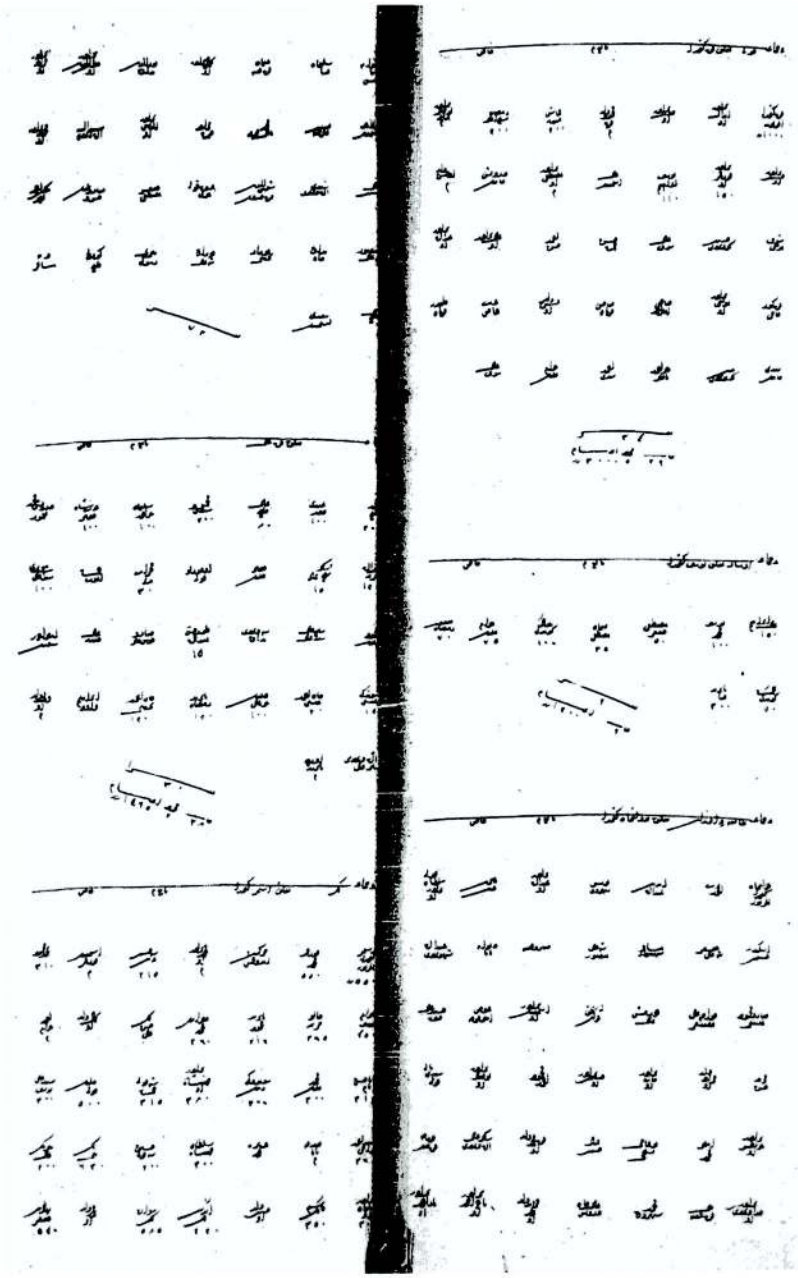
Ek. XII - BA, MAD, nr. 8458, s. 248.
Appendix XII - BA, MAD, nu. 8458, p. 248.



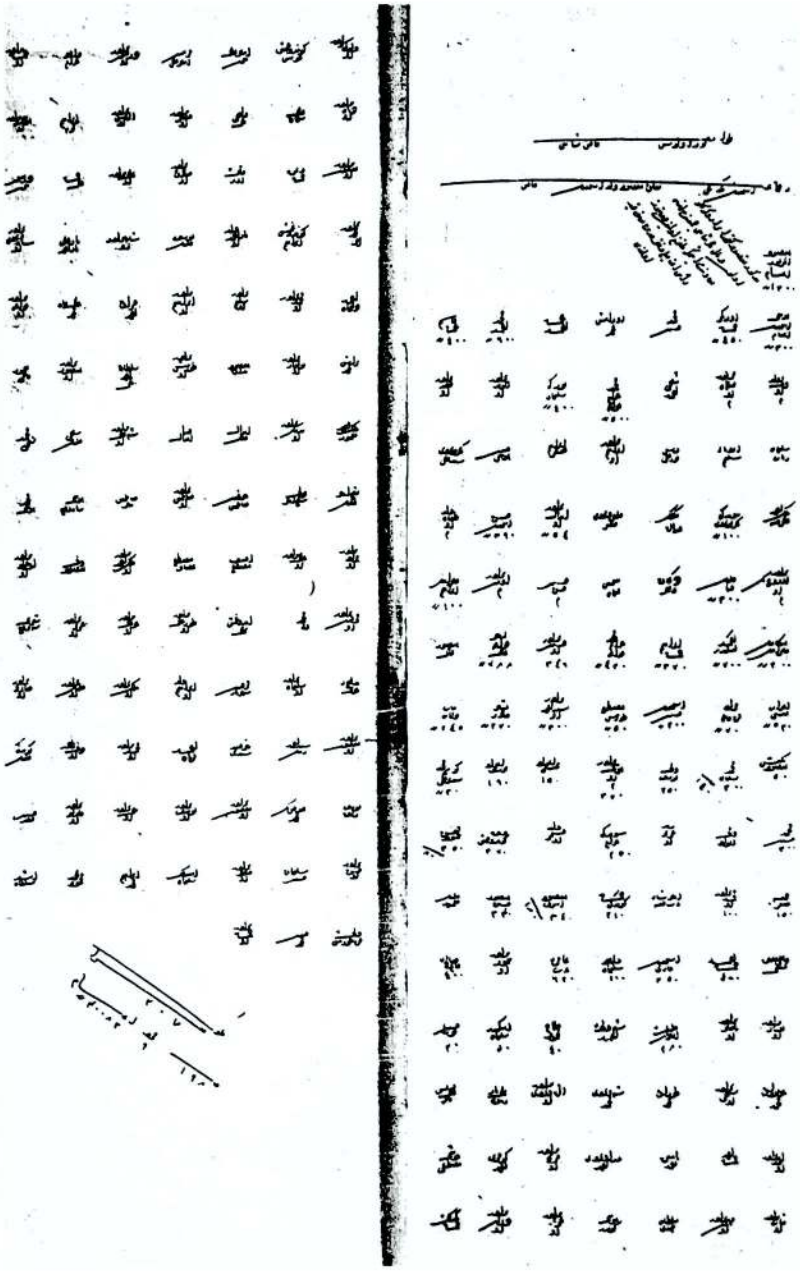
Ek. XIII - BA, MD, nr. 99, s. 52, hüküm 186.
Appendix XIII - BA, MD, nu. 99, p. 52, decree 186.

Ek. XIV - BA, MD, nr. 104, s. 112, hüküm 521.
Appendix XIV - BA, MD, nu. 104, p. 112, decree 521.

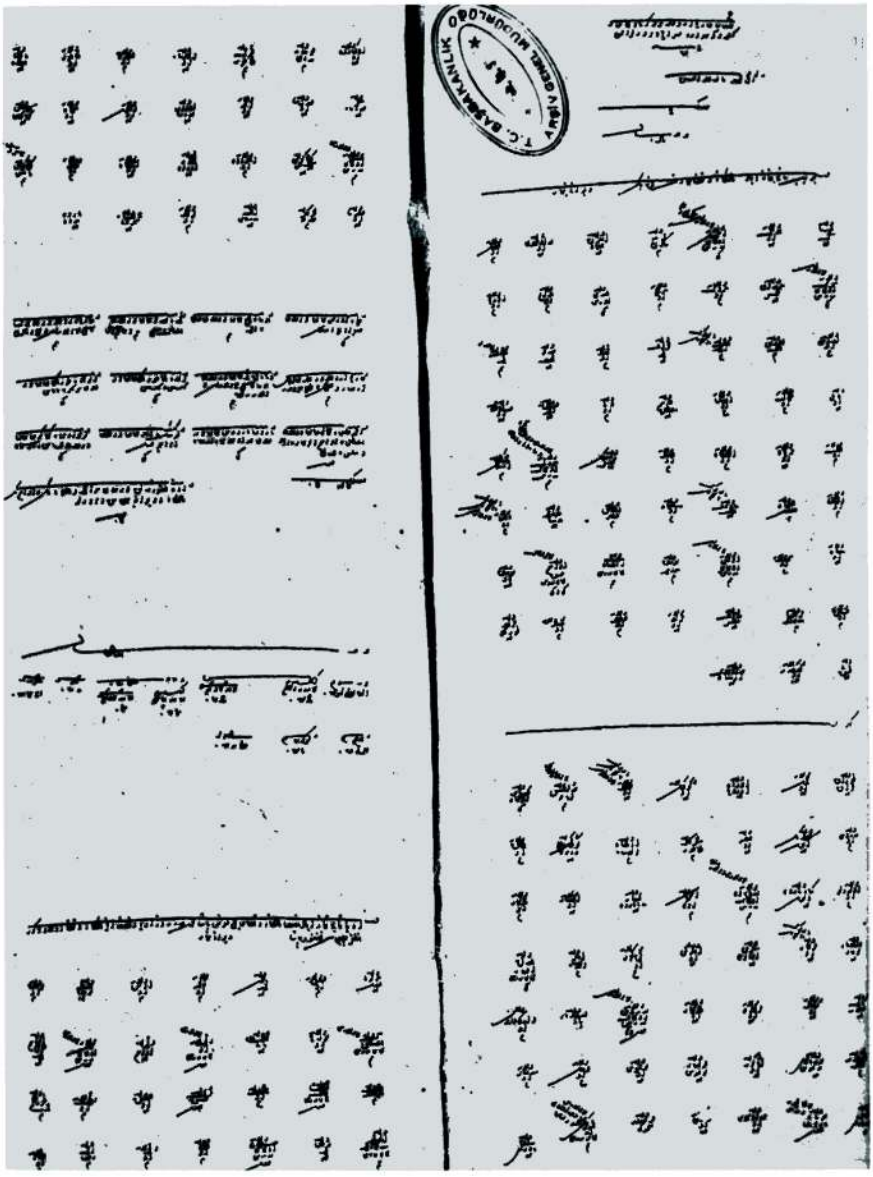
Ek. XV - BA, MD, nr. 102, s. 208-209, hükûm 803.
Appendix XV - BA, MD, nu. 102, pp. 208-209, decree 803.



Ek. XVI - BA, TD, nr. 200, s. 957-958.
Appendix XVI - BA, TD, nu. 200, pp. 957-958.



Ek. XVI - BA, TD, nr. 200, s. 917-918.
Appendix XVI - BA, TD, nu. 200, pp. 917-918.



Ek. XVII - BA, TD, nr. 287, s. 317-318.
Appendix XVII - BA, TD, nu. 287, pp. 317-318.