Volume XVI · Palace, Grand Vizierate, 1906 VMRO Insurgent Key & Balkan War Eve COMSEC (1880–1912)

1898 Tahsin Pasha → Paris Break, 1880–81 Şems Sabâh Quintet, 1903 Skopje 6×5 Polybius Discovery, Captured 1906 VMRO Cipher Key & 1912 Telegraph Jamming

Sources: Ottoman Archives (BOA) · Y..PRK.BŞK., Y..EE.., TFR.I..KV.., TFR.I..M..., HR.SFR.3...

1. Cracked from Scratch: 1898 Palace–Paris Cipher (BOA, Y..PRK.BŞK. 56/51)

Catalogued as undeciphered, this **9 May 1898** Latin-tape telegram signed by Palace First Secretary **Tahsin Pasha** to the Paris Embassy mixes plain Turkish with an alphabetical + `+1000` homophonic `13551–14988` letter/suffix block. Fifteen codes were broken from scratch:

Code	Letter	Name	Verified Word
`13551`	ا	elif	ارسلان (Arslan), فرانسه (Fransa), فرانسزلرك (Fransızların)
`13552`	ب	bâ	شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)
`13554`	ت	tâ	تعیین (ta‘yîn)
`13715`	د	dâl	شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)
`13811 / 14811`	ر	râ (+1000 homofon)	مرعش (Maraş), شهبندرلکی, ارسلان, فرانسه
`13919 / 14919`	س	sîn (+1000 homofon)	ارسلان (Arslan), فرانسه (Fransa)
`13941`	ش	şîn	مرعش (Maraş), شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)
`13962`	ع	‘ayn	مرعش (Maraş), تعیین (ta‘yîn)
`13973 / 14974`	ف	fâ (+1000 homofon)	فرانسه (Fransa), فرانسزلرك (Fransızların)
`13978`	م	mîm	مرعش (Maraş)
`13979 / 14979`	ن	nûn (+1000 homofon)	ارسلان, فرانسه, شهبندرلکی, تعیین
`13982`	ه	hâ	فرانسه (Fransa), شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)
`13988`	ى	yâ	تعیین (ta‘yîn ×2), شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)
`14983`	لا	lâm-elif	ارسلان (Arslan)
`14354`	لك	-lik eki	شهبندرلکی (şehbenderliği)

Recovered historical content: Finding that French authorities were obstructing **Arslan Efendi**'s appointment by tying it to a demand regarding **Maraş**, Sultan Abdülhamid II instructs Paris to inform Arslan Efendi that he may be **appointed to whichever consulate outside France he prefers**.

2. Five 'Unsolved' 1880–1881 `Şems Sabâh` (k=0) Telegrams Unlocked

`BOA, Y..EE.. 40/89` (misdated 1327/1909 in the catalogue; actually 3 Sept 1880 Ioannina→Aydın), `40/165` (6 Nov 1880), `40/175` (29 Jan 1881), `40/178` (10 Mar 1881), and `40/184` (11 Feb 1881, signed by Grand Vizier Saîd Pasha) all carry the `شمس صباح` **(Şems Sabâh, $k=0$)** header and match our Vol. V / XI codebook: `تعداده` (*ta'dâdda*), `55194 = حاصلات` (*hâsılât*), `77419 = مذكوره` (*mezkûre*), `19679 = اولنان` (*olunan*), `صرف` (*sarf*), `مفرط` (*müfrit*), and `اولنمق` (*olunmak*). Companion file `Y..EE.. 40/133` (23 Dec 1880, Muğla) documents a provincial key shortage.

3. 1903 Skopje / Serbian Border: 6×5 Polybius Matrix Discovery (BOA, TFR.I..KV.. 27/2644)

An endorsement dated 12 July 1319 (25 July 1903) explains why this dispatch went undeciphered even in 1903: the provincial key remained in Skopje. All 80 cipher tokens draw from only **20 unique codes** whose first digit lies strictly in `{1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7}` and second digit in `{1, 2, 5, 7, 9}` ($p = 0.3^{80} \approx 10^{-42}$). Exhaustive testing of all 86,400 (`6! × 5!`) alphabetical permutations proves the 6×5 Polybius square was keyed/ non-alphabetical.

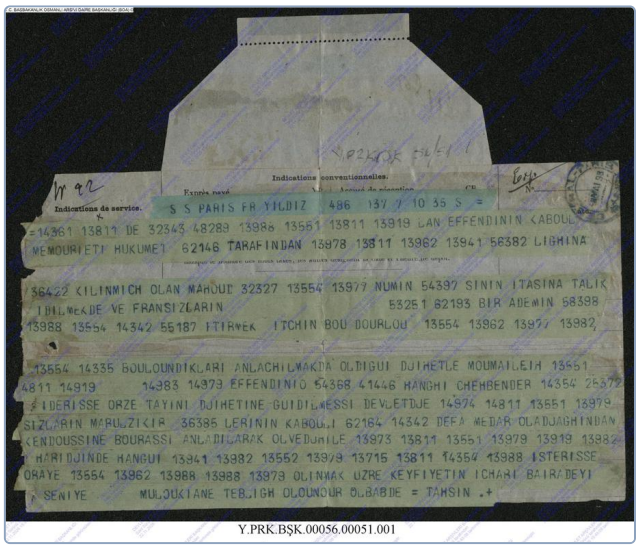
4. Captured 1906 VMRO Insurgent Cipher Key in Skopje (BOA, TFR.I..M... 13/1205)

August 1906: Ottoman counter-intelligence captured an active Macedonian/Bulgarian VMRO insurgent cipher network in Skopje, preserving: (1) the original 29-letter Cyrillic→Latin/Cyrillic substitution key headed in red Ottoman ink *"Cipher key currently in use"* (**а**→ `s` · **б**→ `f` · **в**→ `o` · **г**→ `k` · **д**→ `l` · **е**→ `y` · **ж**→ `c` · **з**→ `p` · **о**→ `b` · **п**→ `d` · **р**→ `i` · **с**→ `a` · **т**→ `u` · **у**→ `x` · **ф**→ `m` · **ш**→ `t`); (2) a red-ink ciphered VMRO dispatch dated **8 August 1906** (`ps ... uycb` = *за … мело*) together with Ottoman intelligence's Cyrillic decipherment and Ottoman Turkish translation regarding a regional congress and delegates; and (3) cover letters on Pleven Agricultural Bank stationery.

5. Deliberate Cipher Garbling Five Days Before the First Balkan War (BOA, HR.SFR.3... 662/41)

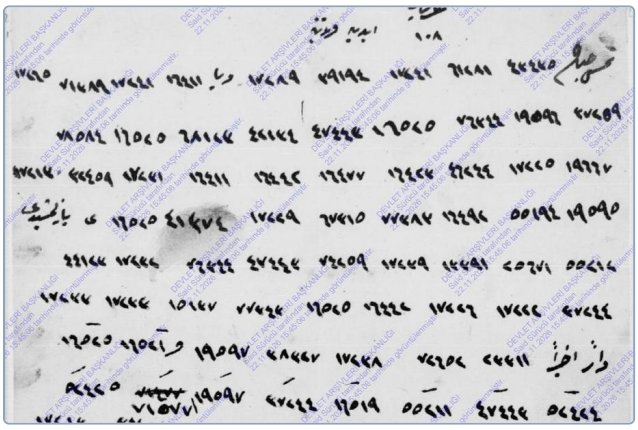
On **3 October 1912** — five days before war broke out — Ottoman Foreign Minister **Gabriel Noradunkyan** telegraphed Ambassador **Tevfik Pasha** in London: *"Gouvernements serbe et bulgare retiennent ou **rendent indéchiffrables** nos télégrammes. Je prie Votre Altesse de vouloir bien les adresser par voie Kustendjé ou Odessa."*

6. Archival Plates (10 Selected Documents)

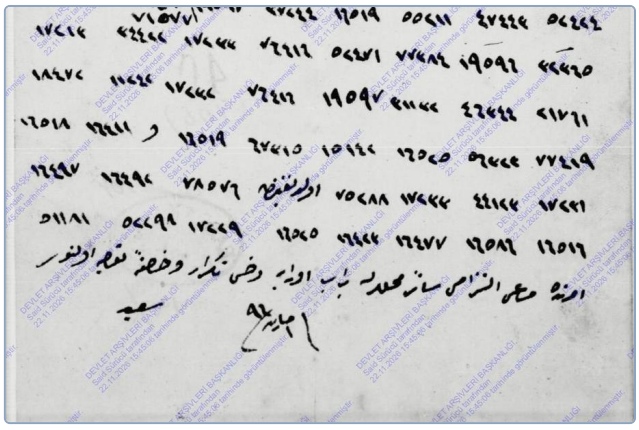


Y.PRK.BŞK.00056.00051.001

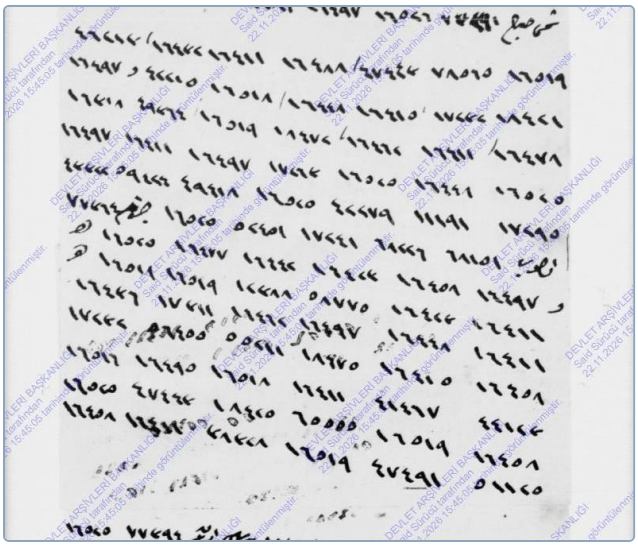
Levha 1 · BOA, Y..PRK.BŞK. 56/51 (9 Mayıs 1898) — Palace First Secretary Tahsin Pasha to Paris Embassy (9 May 1898). 15 letter/suffix codes cracked from scratch: Maraş, Arslan Efendi, Fransa, şehbenderliği, ta'yîn.



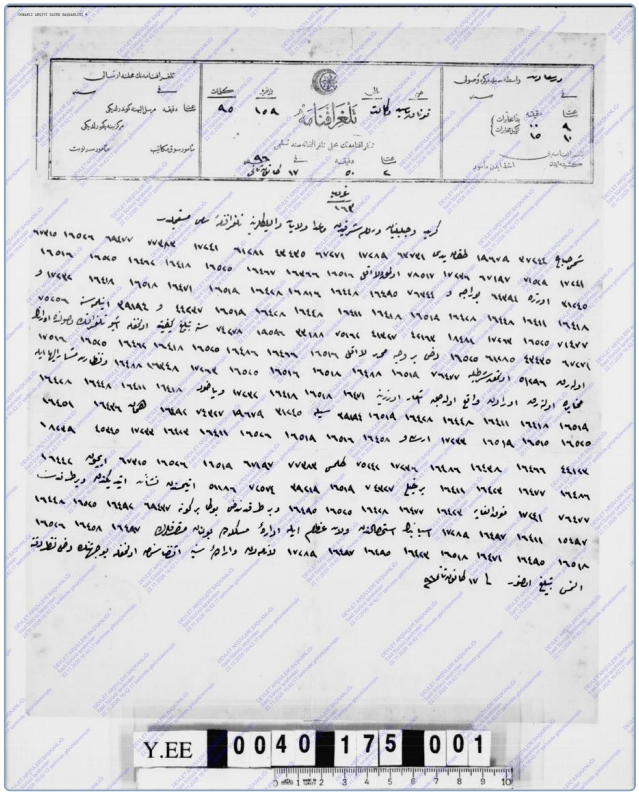
Levha 2 · BOA, Y..EE.. 40/184 (11 Şubat 1881 · Üst) — Grand Vizier Saîd Pasha to Aydın (11 Feb 1881). Marked Şems Sabâh (k=0); ta'dâdda and 55194 = hâsılât verified against Vol. V/XI.



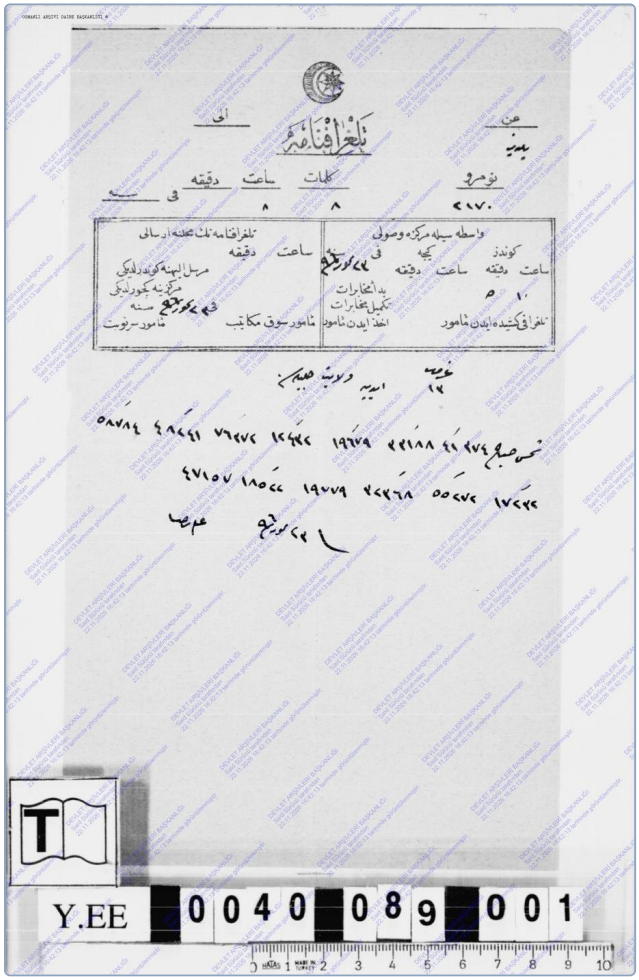
Levha 3 · BOA, Y..EE.. 40/184 (11 Şubat 1881 · Alt) — Lower half of Y..EE.. 40/184 showing 77419 = mezkûre, 18472 = nüfusça, and Saîd Pasha's signed closing line.



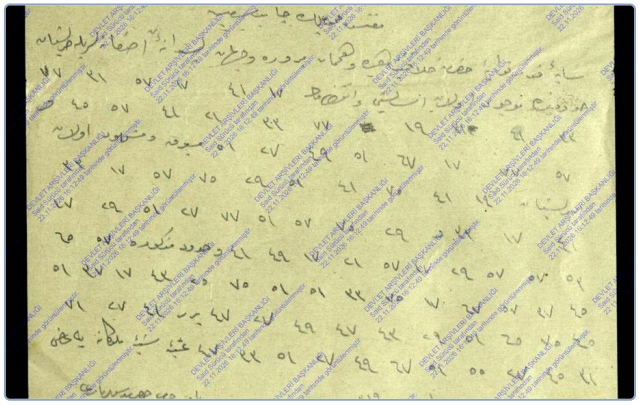
Levha 4 · BOA, Y..EE.. 40/165 (6 Kasım 1880) — Aydın to Palace Secretariat (6 Nov 1880, Şems Sabâh k=0). Dense 16xxx letter spelling: müfrit, olunmak ve lâzım, 19679 = olunan.



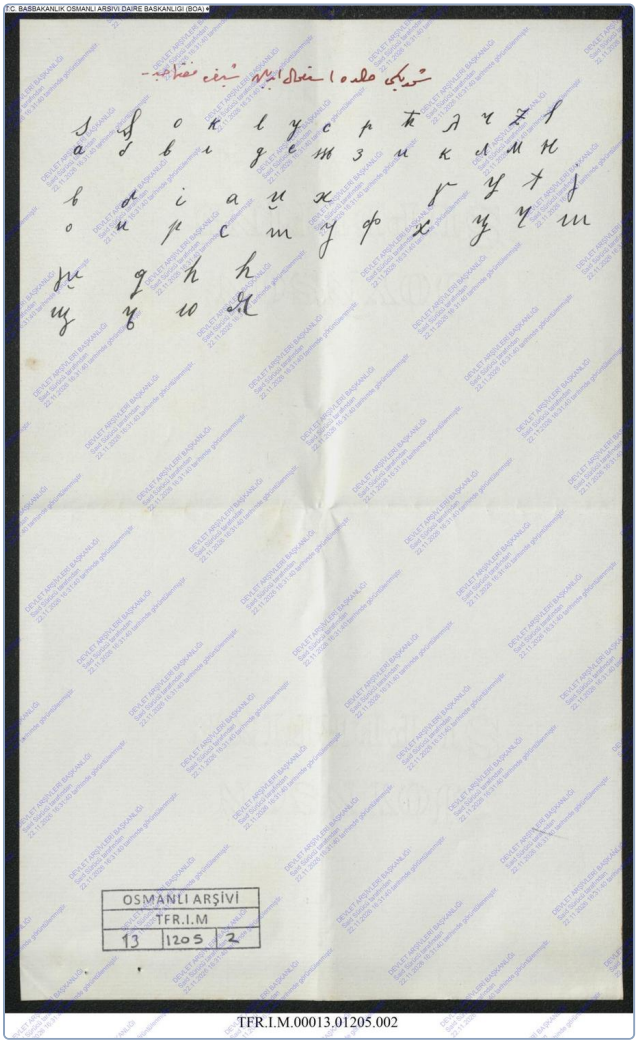
Levha 5 · BOA, Y..EE.. 40/175 (29 Ocak 1881) — Grand Vizierate to Aydın (29 Jan 1881, Şems Sabâh k=0). Ciphered instructions regarding provincial fortifications (sarf).



Levha 6 · BOA, Y..EE.. 40/89 (3 Eylül 1880) — Misdated 1327 (1909) in the catalogue; actually 3 Sept 1880 (Ioannina → Aydın, Şems Sabâh k=0, 19679 = olunan).



Levha 7 · BOA, TFR.I..KV.. 27/2644 (26 Temmuz 1903) — Skopje / Serbian border (26 Jul 1903). 20 unique codes across 80 tokens strictly bounded to {1,2,4,5,6,7} × {1,2,5,7,9} — a 6×5 Polybius matrix ($p \approx 10^{-42}$).



Levha 8 · BOA, TFR.I..M... 13/1205 (p2 · 1906 VMRO Miftahı) — Original 29-letter 1906 Macedonian/Bulgarian VMRO insurgent cipher key captured by Ottoman intelligence in Skopje ('Cipher key currently in use').