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THE EXPRESSIONS EVĀ'IL, EVĀSIṬ AND EVĀHIR IN THE
DATES OF TURKISH MONUMENTS (DOCUMENTS)★

In dating their monuments Islamic nations mostly used their Muslim calendar which counted time according to the Hegirian era. This era began on the first day of the year in which hegira - the day when Mohammed moved from Mecca to Medina - took place. It was on 8th rebiyulevvel of the first Hegirian year or on September 20th of 622 according to the Christian era. Thus, on the basis of the generally accepted, but scientifically still unacknowledged opinion, July 16th or 15th of 622 is considered to be the first day of the Hegirian year (viz. the first muharrem of the first year in relation to Hegira). When studying Turkish and Islamic monuments one has to know how to convert the Hegirian era dates into the corresponding dates of our era.

The task is quite simple if the date of a document is complete, i.e. if the date states the month and the day, expressed in ciphers or by one of the following expressions: *gurre*, *mustehell*, *muntesaf*, *selh* or *āhir*, which denote quite definite days of a month.

The dates, however, are often incomplete. Sometimes the day is missing, or both the day and the month or the day and the month are recorded but the year is missing, etc. But on this occasion we are not interested in all these and other cases but only the ones, very frequent indeed, when the date states the year and the month without stating the day - either by a cipher or by some of the cited expressions - but marks the day by means of one of the following three Arab expressions: *evā'il*, *evāsit* or *evāhir*.

Having in mind the lexical meaning of these expressions and knowing that the Arabs used to divide months into decades just like the Greeks or the Egyptians - from whom the Arabs took this tradition and carried it on to other Islamic nations, the Ottoman Turks among them -

★ Regarding the treatise *Islamic Reckoning of Time and Dates in Turkish Monuments (Documents)* by Gliša Elezović.

European orientalists and turkologists as well as the Eastern Islam authors considered these expressions as denotations of decades of an Arab month. Thus, they believed that evā'il denoted the first decade of an Arab month, evāsīt the second decade and evāhir the last nine or ten days, depending on whether the month had 29 or 30 days.

In such a way it had been understood and interpreted for centuries without anyone ever doubting the correctness of such an interpretation, until 1940, when Prof. Gliša Elezović in his famous collection *The Turkish Monuments* wrote the treatise "Islamic Counting of Time and the Date in Turkish Monuments"¹ where he tried to prove that such an understanding of the expressions evā'il, evasit and evahir is quite incorrect, as well as that such interpretations were made up by old interpreters, European orientalists and turkologists "of their own accord" (op.cit.p.973.) "without wondering whether such an understanding and interpretation made any sense" (op.cit.p.974.). He says this about Y.Deny, professor of the School of Living Oriental Languages in Paris and the founder of the Scientific Turkish Grammar, about Dr. Fr. Kraelitz, former professor of Oriental Languages at the Vienna University and the founder of Turkish Diplomacy, about L. Fekete, professor at the Budapest University, and many other famous orientalists and turkologists, such as Georg Jacob, former professor at the Kiel University, Fr. Bobinger, the Munich University professor, Dr. F.Bajraktarević, the Belgrade University professor, Kraemers, Barthold and others.

Having criticized all the greatest orientalists and turkologists, both in the world and in our country, who understood and interpreted the mentioned expressions as month decades, he claimed and proved that the expression evā'il meant the first day in a month and that it was synonymous with the expressions evvel and gurre; that the expression evasit was plural of vesat and that it meant the middle of a month (14th-15th day in a month) and that the expression evahir was synonymous with the expressions ahir and selh and that it meant only the last day in a month, which is 29th or 30th, depending on whether the month has an even or odd number of days.

Considering this thesis to be correct, G. Elezović thus converted all the dates in the documents of his collection *The Turkish Monuments*, in which the days in the dates were expressed by one of the three expressions mentioned.² He did this whenever these expressions occurred

¹ Gliša Elezović, *Turkish Monuments (Documents)*, Volume I, Book 1, pp. 944–980.

² See, i.ex., document No. 1, pp. 3–4; the manuscript reads: kutibe fī evāhir-i šehr-i rebī' el-āhir-i tāriḥ-i sene tis'a ve hamsīne ve seb'a mie (cf. Kraelitz, *Tāriḥ-i osmānī endžumen-i medžmū'asi*/hereinafter TOEM/ V, 1915, no. 28, p. 244) which means: Written in the last decade (from 21st to 30th) of the month rebīyūlahir 759. Elezović translates as follows: Written in the end of the month rebī el-ahar 759 (ditto, p.4), while he mentions

and persisted in his conviction, applying it consistently without any hesitation. Moreover, not only has he persisted in his opinion till the present day, without limiting it to his applications, but he went much further. He demands his interpretation to be widely accepted and wonders why the expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* can still be understood and interpreted otherwise. G.Elezović brings no proofs to support his statements but he repeatedly points out that in his treatise all the arguments are given, proving that his statement is correct, excluding any further discussion.

So, criticising my collection *Turkish Documents in Bosnia in the Second Half of XVIIth Century*, G. Elezović disapproved of my counting the dates in decades without accepting his thesis.³ He literally says the following:

"The worst thing in this collection is the converting of the Hegirian dates into dates of the Christian era. This ignoramus still counts Turkish dates in decades. In *The Turkish Monuments* I wrote a complete treatise on how the dates in Turkish documents should be converted"⁴. There I explained in detail how the Arab words *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* should be understood. Therefore, when publishing his *Collection of Turkish Documents*, he should have adopted a position concerning this question: for my thesis or against it"⁵.

Elezović completes this part of his critical review as follows: "All the reasons which are against such an interpretation of the words *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* and their variants⁶ are stated in my above mentioned discussion "Islamic Counting of Time and the Date in Turkish Monuments" and the editor should have read it earlier. If only he had done that, his collection of documents would not have been as it is"⁷.

I have known for a long time how Gliša Elezović comprehends and interprets expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir*. He applied it practically in

the same date in the title of the documents as follows: "10-IV-1358 (the end of rebi el-ahar 759)". It is not surprising that Elezović misunderstands and mistranslates this *berat*, that he misinterprets the personal and geographical names, that he omits some of them etc., but he should at least have known that the name of that arabic month is not rebi el-ahar but ribi'el-āhīr. So, it is quite unreasonable that in the first document of his collection he omits a whole quarter, almost the most important part of that document, when he considers it appropriate for inclusion in his collection, while all the others are presented completely. Elezović translates the expression *fī evāsit-i* as "in the middle", cf. document no. 2, p. 6; comp. also document no. 3, ps. 14, 21 etc.

³ *Istorisko-pravni zbornik*, Book no. 2, 1949, pp. 177-208.

⁴ *Islamic Reckoning of Time and Dates of Turkish Monuments (Documents)*, *Turkish Monuments (Documents)*, Volume I, Book 1, pp. 944-980.

⁵ *Contributions to Oriental Philology and the History of the Yugoslav Nations under the Turkish Rule*, Book I, 1950, pp. 173-174.

⁶ My italics

⁷ *Contributions*, p. 174.

1931 in his work "Turko-Serbian Monuments of the Dubrovnik Archives",⁸ but until the appearance of his treatise "Islamic Counting of Time and Dates in Turkish Monuments" I was not quite sure how he justified such a treatment. And when, in 1940, his "Turkish Documents" appeared, in the very first documents in it I saw that Elezović still kept such a treatment without explaining why. However, at the end of that collection, I came across his treatise on that question, and when I saw what he based his theses upon, I realized that his proofs were groundless and wrong, so that I was not surprised to see the competent public ignore his thesis. (Namely, I have heard of no assessment of his collection nor of the discussion). Criticising my collection, Elezović proved once again that he had not yet realised his grave mistake and showed no willingness to correct it. Otherwise, I should not have taken his treatise into consideration, as I think that his arguments do not challenge the prevailing opinions of the specialists. But since Elezović, by his false comprehension and interpretation of the mentioned expressions in his works - which will certainly be used more by our historians than by qualified orientalists and turkologists - wrongly converted hundreds of dates, these errors could cause serious problems to those who would take these statements and interpretations of his as qualified and competent. Therefore, I think that the mentioned treatise by G. Elezović should be discussed.

I mention this because some of the recognized orientalists and turkologists in the world will probably wonder why the question of meaning of the expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* is raised at all.

I

In his discussion G. Elezović first writes quite extensively about the Islam era and the way of dating Turkish monuments, quoting the examples of dates in which the word Hegira was mentioned (op.cit.pp. 944–948). Then he quotes the examples of dating according to some other eras and the types of documents depending on whether they are dated, either completely or incompletely, or they do not have a date at all (op.cit.pp. 948–957). After he has quoted and divided the ancient Turkish monuments into those in which dates are given and those which have no date at all, which is certainly the most useful detail in his whole discussion, he divides the dated documents into two groups: those which have quite definite dates and those in which the date is not completely defined. Into the last group he classifies the documents in which the year and the month are stated, or the year only. All the other dates, according to Elezović, are defined and he states:

⁸ Compare *South Slavic Philologist*, Book XI, 1931, ps. 57, 60, 75.

"If the uncertainty of Hegirian dates were reduced to these two groups only, it would still not be so intolerable. European expert orientalisks, however, have put three more groups of dates into the category of undefined dates, making Islamic and especially Turkish dates very indefinite. This concerns the monuments in which the date, in addition to the Hegirian year and the name of an Arab month, instead of ciphres has the Arab expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir*, which literally mean: first days (beginnings), middle days (middles) and final or the last days (ends). This way of dating is quite frequent. In this collection, for example, out of two hundred monuments there is about one hundred dated in this way. I do not know how, but according to them, these expressions have some "decadic" value"

According to them, the expression *eva'il* denotes the first ten days of an Arab month, *evasit* the next ten days and *evahir* the last ten days. Also, when the expression *fī eva'il* appears in Turkish or Islamic dates in general, it denotes the time from the first to the tenth day of that month, *fī evasit* from 11th to 20th and *fī evahir* from the 21st day to the end of the month (op.cit.p.959).

As a proof of that Elezović gives a number of examples of these "misunderstandings" on the part of European orientalisks, mentioning all the scientists he had found to interpret the expressions *eva'il*, *evahir* and *evasit* in this way (op.cit.pp.959–972).

After that Elezović comes to the main purpose of his discussion: to prove that the expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* mean the first, the fifteenth or the last day in a month.

First he points out that he does not know "on what basis" European scientists and expert orientalisks and turkologists, almost unexceptionally, considered that these expressions denoted decades of a month, and he continues:

"As far as I know, an Egyptian month had 30 days grouped into three decades which had their names according to the phase of the Moon: "fi fissate a 30 giorni, regroupati in tre decadi" (Enciklopedia Italiana, VIII, s. v. calendario, str. 396-b, u članku II calendario egiziano),

but what application these decades had in practical counting of time is not known to me. So far, nobody has given any reliable proofs on whether Islamic nations really counted time in their documents according to month decades. As for the Ottoman Turks, since history recognized them as an Islamic nation, it can be claimed that they never calculated time in that way, nor did they write dates in that imperfect way, in decades, as the mentioned and many other European turkologists think" (op.cit.p.972).

These quotations show that G. Elezović got into this discussion before he had studied its basic elements, which had not been quite clear

and known to him. Anyhow, it did not prevent him from making audacious conclusions without previous studies.

He does say that is is not known to him on what basis European scientists and turkologists interpret the mentioned expressions as decades; he does not know what practical application the division of months into decades had in ancient Egypt (he does not mention the Greeks at all). He is bothered by the question whether Islamic nations calculated time by month decades in their documents and he thinks they did not, because it has never been proved. As to the Ottoman Turks, Elezović thinks he can claim "that they had never calculated time in that way nor had they written dates in decades, as the mentioned and many other European turkologists think".

I think that Elezović should have studied and clarified these questions to himself before undertaking to write this discussion. The more so, because he obviously put these questions to himself and because they bothered him. It is hardly possible only by asking questions, to deny that Islamic nations divided months into decades in the past. The consequence of such a treatment is reflected in many of these statements and also in the way of presenting the questions asked. He often searches for proofs of the simplest things. Thus, for example, he investigated whether anyone had proved that Islamic nations calculated time in month decades. After he realised that "no one had proved it", he concluded that there was no such calculating at all. Such a treatment is as incorrect as it would be to ask for proofs that we divide months into weeks, and, if we find that it has not been proved, to conclude that we do not do so. That is how G. Elezović deals with these questions.

It is enough to quote only the following few proofs that Islamic nations, and the Ottoman Turks as well, divided months into decades in their documents from the ancient times till the recent past:

1. In the Gazi-Husrev-Beys Library in Sarajevo there is an old Arab manuscript of the work "Kitab el-kešf ve 'l-bejan 'an tefsir el-kur'an" written by Ebu Ishak Ahmed b. Muhamed b. Ibrahim es-Sa'lebi en-Nisaburi who died in 527 (1053) (see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, I, 350). In the end of the manuscript there is transcripator's note with the date of the transcription where it is written: ferega min ketbihi el-'abd el-fakīr... Berekāt ibn 'Isa ibn Ebi Ja'la Hamza... ve zalike fil-'ašr el-evvel min zil-hidždžeti sene ihda ve seb'in ve hamse mije . . .

This means: The transcription finished by a poor Good's servant...

Berekat b. 'Isa b. Ebi Ja'la Hamza . . .

and it was in the first decade of the month zilhicce in 671=11th – 20th of June, 1176. (see H. Šabanović, *Catalogue of Arab, Turkish and Persian Manuscripts of the Gazi-Husrev-Beys Library in Sarajevo*, page 72). It is

obvious that people in VIIth century of the Hegirian era, or XIIth century of our era, calculated time in decades.

2. There is no recognized Arab historian whose works I have read, who does not use decades in calculating time in his documents. For example, I quote here a few excerpts from the famous work "Kitab el—muhtesar fi ahbar el—beßer" written by the famous and highly recognized Arab historian and geographer 'Imaduddin Isma'il b. Ali b. Mahmud Ebu 'l—Fida, who died in 732/1331 (see Brockelmann, op. cit.II,44). Speaking about the Halebia administration in Damascus in 658, Ebu 'l—Fida says:

فلما جرى ما ذكرناه . . . جمع الحلبي الناس وحلقهم لنفسه بالسلطنة و ذلك فى العشر الاول من ذى الحجة
من هذه السنة اعنى سنة ثمان وخمسين وستائة فاجابه الناس الى ذلك آيخ

It means: After the mentioned events had passed... Halebi gathered people and demanded that they take their oath of allegiance to him as a sultan. This happened in the first decade (el—'aşr el—evvel) of the month zilhicce of that year, i.e. the year of 658. People have responded to it, etc. (op.cit. the first Kairo edition, Vol. III, p. 208. line 15—18).

For the year of 739, Ebu 'l—Fida recorded the following:

وفى فى العشر الاول من جمادى الاولى قدم الامير سيف الدين طرغاي الى حلب فاناها آيخ

It means: In that year (739), in the first decade of the month cumad. I, Emir Sejfuddin Targaj became the commissary in Haleba. (op.cit.IV,128,line 22—23).

Listing historical events from 666, Ebu 'l—Fida speaks about the campaign of Sultan ez—Zahir Bajbars, the great organizer of the Mameluke state, against Syria, about the conquest of Antakia and other places, and he literally says this:

فى هذه السنة فى مستهل جمادى الآخرة توجه الملك الظاهر بيبرس بمساركه المتوافرة الى الشام وفتح يافا فى
العشر الاوسط من الشهر المذكور آيخ

It means: In this year, on cemaziyelahir the first (mustehell), Sultan ez—Zahir Bajbaras set out with a great army to Syria and conquered Jaffa in the second decade of the month, etc. (op.cit.IV,4, line 25—26).

When Ebu 'l—Fida speaks about the events in 739, he also says:

وفى فى العشر الاوسط من ربيع الآخر توفى السيد الشريف بدر الدين محمد بن زهرة الحسينى نقيب الاشراف
و وكيل بيت المال بجلب

In the second decade of the month rebiyulahir of that year, Sejjid Šerif Bedruddin Muhammed ibn Zuhre el—Husejni, the representative

of the Sheriff and the commissioner of Bajtulmal (fiscus) in Haleb, died. (op.cit.IV,128, line 9–10). The same examples are to be found in Vol IV, page 6, page 35 etc.)

Speaking about the restoration of the fort of Damascus, Ebu 'l-Fida says:

و في هذه السنة في العشر الاخير من ذى القعدة شرع الأمير علم الدين سنجر الحلبي نائب السلطنة بدمشق في
عمارة قلعة دمشق آلع

It means: In that year, in the last decade of the month zilkade, Emir Alemuddin Sendžer el-Halebi, Sultans commissioner in Damascus, set out to restore the town of Damascus etc. (op.cit.III,208, line 10–12). The same expressions, for example, in Vol.IV, page 6.

When the writer tells about the Haleb army's campaign against Syss in 705, he says:

في أوائل الحرم من هذه السنة الموافق للعشر الاخير من تموز أرسل فرا ستر نائب السلطنة بجلب آلع

It means: In the first decade of Muharrem of this year (705), which corresponds to the last decade of Temuz, Kara Senker, Sultan's commissioner in Haleb, sent etc. (op.cit. IV, line 51–52).

Regarding the death of the scholar Ibn Hatib, Ebu 'l-Fida said:

و مولده رحمه الله بمصر في العشر الاواخر (!) من شهر ربيع الاول سنة اثنتين وستين و ستمائة

It means: He was born —may God forgive him! — in Cairo in the last decade (fi 'l-‘ašr el-evahiri) of the month rebiyulevvel in 662 (op. cit. IV, 128), and so on.

Thus, in a couple of pages of only one work, we have found enough evidence that Islamic nations in their earlier past practically applied time counting in decades. We could go on endlessly in this way, quoting such evidence from different authors and ages.

3. On the original of Muslihudin Čekrekčija's vakufnama regarding his memorials in Sarajevo and Visoko, written in the month zilkade = August 1526, there is an official seal of the Sarajevo cađi 'Abdullah b. Ali el-Mu'ejjeda dated as follows:

ve zalike fi 'l-‘ašr el-evveli min ula el-džumadejn li sene 948.

It means: This happened in the first decade of the first of the two cumads in 948, i.e. August 23rd – September 1st 1541. (see H. Kreševljaković, "Džamija i vakufhana Muslihudina Čekredžije" (offprint from *Glasnik IVZ V*, 1938; facsimile on p. 14). I think that this is a clear evidence that the Ottoman Turks in the 16th century divided months into decades and that they used the decadic system of dating in their legislature.

4. In the collection of Oriental manuscripts owned by M. Grbić from Belgrade, there is the original of an idžazetnama (school diploma)

issued by Osman ibn Velijuddin Sirivli to a Husein b. Hasan el-Karinabadi-ji, dated as follows:

fi l-jevm el-hamis min el -'ašr el-evveli min džumadi el-ula senete selasin ve selasune ve mietejn ba'd el-elf min hidžreti men lehu 'l-'izzu veš-šeref...

It means: On Thursday in the first decade of cumad. I in 1233 of Hegira of the one who deserves fame and honour...

This is only one among innumerable examples which show that the Ottoman Turks in the 19th century still used the system of time counting according to the decades of Arab months.

II

We could quote a lot more of such clear evidence from different centuries and sources, but we consider these sufficient to reveal the relationship between an established scientific fact and G. Elezović's claim that "time counting in decades has not been found out in sources from the past". There is no need to prove how Islamic nations adopted these institution, which Elezović found in ancient Egyptians and which was also applied by other ancient peoples. After all, the mere fact that the author of the mentioned treatise considers all the former interpretations of the expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* wrong, "disregarding the situation in the earliest Islamic past" (op.cit.pp. 927-973), entitles us to consider these questions immaterial.

There is no point in quoting different Eastern (Biruni, Mesudi) or Western (Ideler, Ginzel) authorities, for Elezović could, in case they were not in favour of his thesis, declare them unreliable, just as he declared so many other specialists, old translators and Turkish lexicographers only because their interpretations contradicted his opinion.

Namely, when the author in question observes that "time counting in decades has not been confirmed by the sources from the past", the question inevitably arises: "how could it occur that so many people thought that the Arab words *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* in dates meant the first, the middle and the last decade or the first, middle of last days in a month?". He turned then to Turkish dictionaries and, seeing that they spoke against his thesis, instead of being more cautious in drawing conclusions, he accused these dictionaries of causing this "mistake", and concluded as follows:

"Disregarding the situation in the earliest Islamic past, it seems to me that various Turkish dictionaries misled foreigners in interpreting these expressions. The very form of these words misled people. It has never crossed anyone's mind that the forms of Arab plural of nouns

had been long and rather often considered as ordinary singular" (op. cit. p. 973).

As we said, Elezović had practically applied his thesis as early as 1931, that is before the publication of the famous collection by L. Fekete in which he, as we shall see, found the main argument in support of his opinion and only after that published his treatise on this question, openly opposing the prevailing interpretations of the mentioned expressions. It seems that this was partly a consequence of G. Elezović's conviction that the Arab expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* were used as singular forms in Turkish, which was indeed the case with many other Arab nouns in plural, the fact which, according to Elezović, never crossed anyone's mind.

To the above statements of G. Elezović we should give at least the following comments:

1. When Elezović wondered who had misled many orientalists and old translators and found out that it had been the Turkish lexicographers, he should have also wondered who had misled the Turkish lexicographers and should have searched for the "culprits".

2. G. Elezović should have said where he found that the Arab forms *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* were considered as singular in Turkish, whether he was misled by a source or he simply claimed something that had crossed his mind and no one else's before. Elezović should have supported his claim by examples from sources, if he had any, as it is his habit when proving his claims or pointing out other people's mistakes.

3. How can Elezović claim that no one knew that the forms of Arab plural of nouns had long and often been considered as singular in Turkish when this fact is always emphasized in all dictionaries and, of course, in the ones he quoted - with all the Arab words whose plural is indeed used as singular in Turkish (as well as in Persian).

But this, of course, is never and nowhere said about the forms *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir* for they have neither in Turkish nor in Arab been used as singular. That is why it has never crossed anyone's but Elezović's mind.

I do not find it necessary to go any further in pointing out how far Gliša Elezović went in his self-conceit about his knowledge of Turkish. He dared to declare the interpretations of all the Turkish lexicographers (for all the others agreed with the ones he quoted) wrong only because they were contradicting his opinion. He did not find what he looked for in the Turkish dictionaries because it does not exist in Turkish at all.

Let us go a bit further. In order to make his statement valuable, G. Elezović had to deal not only with expert orientalists, European turkologists and Turkish lexicographers but with the ancient interpreters of Turkish documents as well, and he says:

"Having such interpretations, Turkish translators and European orientalists in general, especially turkologists, made perhaps their own

interpretation that the mentioned three forms of Arab plural in Turkish dates meant the first, the second and the last decade in a month, without thinking whether such an interpretation made any sense (op.cit.p.974). As a proof of that he quotes that "in a contemporary translation of a ferman in our language the date follows:

ПРВОН ДНН (read "prvi dni") ПНЧДНЧ ССЕФДРД ѿ П Н.

(Lj. Stojanović, op.cit.No. 885)". But when he felt that this example could be used as an argument against his thesis, he added this as well: "This is obviously a somewhat free translation from Arabic: fi evail-i-šehr-i-sefer, (i) sene semane ve semanine ve semane mije." The translator was aiming - states Elezović - to find the appropriate form for the Arab expression evail, which is the plural form of evvel, and that is why he said:

ПРВОН ДНН and when the original was ševvalinin guresindan (!), the translator said:

ШЕВАЛ МСЦА ПРВОН ДН (read ševal msca prvi den) (Corr.No.95, on page 265 of his collection and Lj.Stojanović, op.cit.No.917 v.5.).

Even such examples could not discourage Elezović and he continues as follows:

"In a contemporary translation of a ferman by Sultan Selim I into Italian, the final item of the protocol, concerning the place where the ferman was written, says: Tahrire(n) fi evasit-i-gemazi el evvel sene, tis'a 'aşere ve tis'a mije, be mekam-i-Konstantinijje. An unknown translator wrote in Italian: Data in Constantinopolj li mezarij de gumazi el euel, ono 919".

"Obviously - continues G.Elezović - the translators were trying to find a word which would, semantically and lexically, be appropriate to the Arab words evail, evasit and evahir, and when they failed, they were not reluctant to invent such a form as:

ПРВОН ДНН in our language, or mezarij in Italian, without bothering what these expressions were supposed to mean and what number of days in a month they included. But, in my opinion, says G.Elezović, if they ever meant anything indefinite in Islamic dates, as it is scientifically said "the months decades", in Turkish dates, from the ancient times, they were equal to the meaning: the beginning, the first day - same as the word "gurre" -, the middle or the day in the middle of a month, and the end or the last day of a month, as the Arab word selh" (p.974).

From this explication of G. Elezović it is obvious that the ancient translators, noticed clearly the difference in meaning between the expressions "evvel" and "gurre", on the one hand, and the expression eva'il, on the other, that they exactly knew what evasit meant and that they made a clear distinction in the meaning of the expressions "selh"

and "ahir" related to "evahir". On one occasion, Elezović demanded that, concerning pronunciation of the names of the Arab months we take, the ancient translators as competent, but on this occasion he is not satisfied with their understanding and interpretation of these expressions. Later on we shall see that, in proving his understanding of the expressions *evasi* and *evahir*, he relies upon these ancient translators, considering their translations as a proof of his own opinions.

III

Analysing the scientific approach of G. Elezović, a question, quite opposite to the one that bothered Elezović, is raised: what made G. Elezović contradict the prevailing opinion about the meaning of those expressions?

We have seen that he could have been misguided by a lack of information about Islamic nations and the Ottoman Turks dividing months into decades; a lack of information that it was practiced in the Turkish administration offices as well; we have shown that he was wrong when he blamed the Turkish dictionaries and, also, in his opinion about his knowledge of the Turkish language, etc. But all this should not have been a strong enough argument for him to blame all the orientalisists, turkologists, the ancient translators and Turkish lexicographers.

He did this convinced that he had at his disposal much stronger arguments and today he demands his opinion to be accepted, wondering how anyone could be against it. These arguments Elezović divides into "general assumptions" and the "objective facts".

The general assumptions imply that the Turks appeared at the Balkans with a well organized state government and administration, without anything being done "by chance or approximately" but according to the precisely established regulations, "so that it would have been inconceivable for them not to find a way to measure and note time in a manner more precise than the one implied in the decadic counting". (op. cit. p. 974.).

I hope that G. Elezović would not be angry if I pass in silence over his "general assumptions", because he himself can see that those assumptions, even if supposedly correct, would not necessarily make the decadic counting seem irrational. But, let us take a better look at the "objective facts" which G. Elezović has at his disposal.

As the first proof, the first "objective fact" about the correctness of his thesis, G. Elezović quotes this:

"In the ancient anonymous Turkish chronicles, edited by Fr. Babinger, *Tevarih-i-ali-Osmani*, on page 123 v.8, speaking about Sultan Murat II, it is said:

Higretin sekiz juz elli dortinde sefer etmijub, mutemekkin olub, otururken mariz oldi. Ol hastalikde dar-i-fenadan dar-i-bekaje rihlet etdi muharrem ajinin evvelinde, çeharşenbe guni hakk emrine vasil oldi higretin sekiz juz elli beşinde (i.e., In Hegirian 854 he was not in war. He kept peace. In this idleness he got sick and, at the beginning of the month of muharrem, on Wednesday of Hegirian 885=3-II-1451 he moved from this ephemeral world to the eternity obeying God's orders)". (op. cit.p. 975.)

After this argument G. Elezović says:

"Because of the completeness of this date, there is no need to make any suppositions such as, for example, that the word "evvel" means the first decade or whatever else, but it simply means the beginning, the first day, for the first day of Muharrem was really Wednesday". (p. 975).

It should be objected that this example could not be a proof because the expression "evvel", not "eva'il", is used and even G. Elezović knows that no one has ever claimed that the expression "evvel" (meaning nothing but "the first") denotes the first decade. This is only claimed for the expression "eva'il" (pl. of "evvel") and "evvel" and "eva'il" are not synonyms, as G. Elezović thinks. Therefore, he made another mistake and failed to prove that "eva'il" meant only the first day in a month.

Let us go a bit further. As the second proof, the second "objective fact" in favour of the correctness of his statement, G. Elezović quotes:

"In the collection of L. Fekete⁹ we have a fairly good example that "eva'il" means nothing but the first day in an Arab month". The final paragraph of the contract signed by Emperor's and Sultan's representatives, No. 7, p. 27 in Turkish says: "Bu jazilan mevadde itikkad-i-sahih olmagičün iki ganibin vükelasi imzalajüb mühürlemişuz Komoranda. Jazildi februanun jigirmi jedingi gününde bin altijüz on sekiz senesinde ki hezret-i-İsa tarihidir ve bizim tarihimiz ki bin jigirmi jedingi rebi-ül-evvelin evalinde vaki olmişdir. — Sahh." This paragraph, in a somewhat incorrect German translation by L. Fekete, says (op.cit.pp. 235-236):

"Zur grösseren Beglaubigung dieser aufgezeichneten Punkte unterschreiben und beseigelten Wier sie, Wir, die Vertreter der beiden Parteien. Geschreiben in Komran am siebenundzwanzigsten Tage im Februar des Jahres tausendsechshundert undachtzehn nach der Zeitrechnung der Majestät Jesu; nach unserer Zeitrechnung aber geschah es in der ersten zehn Tagen des Rebi-ül-evvel im Jahre tausendisebenundzwanzig. Gesehen 26 Februar — 2 März 1618" (op.cit.p. 975).

G. Elezović was so fond of this example that he continued:

"There is hardly a better example to see how the generally

⁹ He means Fekete's Collection: *Türkische Schriften aus dem Archive des Palatins Nikolaus Esterhazy 1606-1645*, Budapest, 1932.

recognized Turkish language experts, under different suggestions, made ridiculous mistakes" and a bit latter he wrote:

"Even if this was the only example, it would be enough to discourage Western scientists', orientalist's and turkologist's conviction that the Turks, in their administrative juridical acts used such an imperfect and indefinite way of dating as the dating by decades". (op.cit.pp. 975-976).

Indeed, I am not surprised that G. Elezović could have been delighted with this example for a moment. There was, perhaps, a considerable possibility of misguiding even other people by the way he understood that example. G. Elezović explains it like this:

"In the contract mentioned, whose original was made in Turkish, the Turks say that it was signed and sealed in Komoran on February 27th 1618 of the Christian era or on the first day of rebiyülevvel in 1027 of the Hegirian era. L. Fekete was mistaken when he claimed that the Kanjiža District Governer Ahmed, the Belgrade kadi Habil and Ali aga, all Sultan's assistants, had known the exact date of the Christian era, but not the date in their own calendar, so they had noted that it had happened in a period of ten days of rebiyülevvel! But L. Fekete made this mistake, as well, misguided by the expression "eva'il"! Nevertheless, if the expression "eva'il" did not mean the first day, Turkish delegates would have found the word which would strictly correspond to February 27th, 1618 of the Christian era instead of leaving such an important date "hang" within the period between February 2nd and March 7th" (op.cit.p. 975).

So we have listed all the Elezović's arguments to prove that the Turks used the expression "eva'il" as singular, that in Turkish, the expressions "evvel" and "eva'il" are synonyms, that the expression "eva'il" in the dates of Turkish monuments, just as "evvel" and "gurre", means the first day of an Arab month, as well as that any other interpretation is wrong. Elezović considers his thesis absolutely proved with those two examples and he concludes:

"According to the examples mentioned, I think that the Turks used the expression "eva'il" (pl. of "evvel") as singular in the same way as they did with so many Arab names, making their singular form plural. Accordingly, I think that the expression "eva'il" in a date meant the first day of a month, the same as "evvel", and that word could by no means denote the first decade, as it is wrongly accepted in the world (op.cit.p. 976)"

We have seen Elezović's first proof, so let us carefully discuss the second argument he uses to eliminate "the errors of Western scientists, orientalist's and turkologist's".

Searching for the example in L. Fekete's collection, in Mahler's paralel calendar he found that the first day of rebiyulevvel of 1027 Hegirian year was the 26th, instead of February 27th 1618, and he says

about this difference:

"I cannot definitely state the cause of that one-day difference, but it might, for instance, occur because a day of the lunar year lasted from sunset to sunset. But whatever the cause, it does not change our statement that the word "eva'il" in Turkish dates meant exactly the first day in a month and that any other interpretation is wrong (p. 976)."

What should we say about such a scientific method of Mr. Gliša Elezović? He himself can see that something is wrong with that "tailor made" example with one day difference. He does not know the cause of that difference but that does not prevent him from saying: "Whatever the cause of the difference, it does not change my statements at all", and that "any other interpretation is wrong."

But exactly that one-day difference which he fails to explain shows that this proof of his is not based on arguments and that it invalidates his statement. That difference between the Christian and the Hegirian date indicates that the expression "eva'il" can denote something else beside the first day in a month.

If G.Elezović's thesis had had any scientific basis, it could have been supported by many examples, much better than those used by Elezović; examples in which no differences would occur and where the day in a date, expressed with the word "eva'il" would indeed be the first day in a month. The same holds for the expressions "evasit" and "evahir". Nevertheless, with such examples it cannot be proved that the expressions "eva'il", "evasit" and "evahir" mean only the first, the fifteenth or the last day in a month, but that, as the denotations of Arab month decades, they include those days as well. Thus, the expression "eva'il" can denote the first day in the first decade of an Arab month, as well as any other day in that decade.

Moreover, we must also point out that we would not mind one or two days difference, not because the lunar year lasts from sunset to sunset, as G.Elezović put it, but because a difference of one or two days can occur in converting Hegirian into our era dates, depending on which day is taken as the first day of the Hegirian era (July 15th or 16th) and whether a month has an even or odd number of days. So, we have offered clues to G.Elezović to support his thesis, although it would all be in vain. The expression "eva'il" in a date may coincide with the first day in a month, but it is not its only meaning, because it can correspond to any day in the first decade of that month, as we shall show. And in the example found and used by G.Elezović, the expression "eva'il" corresponds to the second, not the first day of rebiyulevvel 1027, because the Hegirian 2nd of rebiyulevvel corresponds to February 27th 1618 of our era. Those who had signed the contract knew their own calendar, as well as the Christian one, very well. As the beginning of the Muslim era they took 16th of July, thus excluding the one day difference which

usually appears when converting the dates of older Turkish and Islamic documents in general.

So, unfortunately, this example, which seemed so good to G. Elezović, fails to accomplish its task.

However, since the one day difference appeared – and G. Elezović did not know its cause – and since he wanted to use only that example to prove that the expression "eva'il" meant "the first", he had to suppose: either the contract was signed after sunset, or the Sultan's representatives knew the date according to the Christian calendar, but not according to their own. I think that G. Elezović himself will be strongly against the first supposition as he was against the other one. But it only shows that he was not careful enough when formulating his statements.

IV

From the above analysis of the arguments and the "objective facts" which Elezović used to oppose all the authorities and on which he based his statement that "eva'il" meant only the first day in a month, it can, perhaps, be seen that these arguments not only fail to prove his statement, but are also somewhat contradictory to his own opinion, confirming the opinions of the experts.

However, the examples have not offered any scientific grounds, either to oppose the common opinion and interpretation of the mentioned expressions or to disqualify all the qualified orientologists, turkologists and Turkish dictionaries. We have shown that what the author supported his claims with speaks against his own ideas. But, perhaps, all this is not enough to shake G. Elezović in his firm conviction and to discourage him in defending his mistaken attitudes. Therefore I shall give several examples which, I hope, he will find fairly clear, reasonable and firm to make him realize that he was mistaken when he criticised the opinions and the interpretations of the experts. I hope that he will not be surprised to find me interpreting these expressions as denotations of month decades.

1. In the State Archives of Dubrovnik (Acta Turcarum, Series B, file 10, No. 28) there is an original letter from the Bosnian beglerbey Salihpasha, written in Turkish. With that letter Salihpasha informs the Republic that he came to Sarajevo as a new Bosnian Begler-bey, asking them, according to the ancient custom, to send him emissaries as they used to do to his predecessors. In the letter itself it is explicitly said that it had been written in Sarajevo and that Salihpasha had come to Sarajevo the second day of ramazan of the year 1045 (February 9th 1636), and in the end of the letter, the date is written like this:

Tahrir^{en} fi eva'ili ramadan el-mubarek sene 1045.

It means: Written in the first ten days, in the first decade of the blessed ramazan of the year 1045. (February 8–17th 1936).

Here we can only suppose that Salihpasha could not have written this letter before the very day of his arrival to Sarajevo, and that is the second day of ramazan of 1045, or February 9th of 1636. Therefore, in this case, the expression *eva'il* cannot mean the first day of the month, but at least the second day, regardless of the fact that a lunar year day lasts from one sunset to another and regardless of the possible disagreements which might occur while converting Hegirian dates into the dates of our era, depending on which day was taken as the beginning of the Hegirian year. Here, we not even need the parallel calendars; it is irrelevant to us whether Salihpasha knew the date of his calendar; our opinion about the Turkish administration is also immaterial. We do not need either the general suppositions or any indirect evidence, because the document testifies for itself.

That is why, in this case, the expression "*eva'il*" can by no means and under no assumptions denote the first day in the month, but at least the second one.

2. In the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo (Collection of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Hadžijamakovičs, No. 5.) there is a manuscript copy of the famous shariat-judicial work "*el ešbah venneza'ir*" in Arabic, written by Ibn Nudžejm, who died in 970/1563 (Brockelmann, *op.cit.*p. 310).

In the end of the manuscript there is a transcriber's signature and the date of the transcription which originally reads:

"fi *eva'ili zi'l-ka'de eš-šerife fi jevm el-isnejn li seneti sitin ve erbe'ine ve elf*"

This means:

on Monday, in the first decade of the honourable month zilkade of the year 1046 = March 1st – 10th of 1636.

According to the parallel calendars of Wustefeld-Mahler, the first day of the month zilkade of 1046, was on Friday, March 27th 1636, and the first and the only Monday within the first ten days of this month and year was zilkade 4th, 1046 or March 30th 1636. Therefore, here the expression "*eva'il*" cannot mean the first, but only the fourth day of the month.

But this argument might have an objection: that it comes from the private source, that it is not recorded in the official documents of the Turkish administration, that it is only an exceptional case, etc. For that reason, I shall give a few more proofs to which, I hope, nobody could find any objection.

3. In the excellently edited collection of Turkish letters of Esterhazy's Archives, by L. Fekete, in which G. Elezović discovered his main example, the value of which we have seen, there is the Turkish text of the Peace Treaty between Rudolph II and Sultan Ahmed I (No. 2. pp. 7–14).

In the end of the text there is a date expressed in both the Muslim and the Christian era, as follows:

"Ve becede saedetlu roma imperatorun sarayinde yazilubki hazreti Isanin bin alti yuz on bes senesinde mah-i yuliyonin gurreesinde yazildi. Tahriren evail-i mah-i cumazel-ahir sene erba ve isrine ve elf" (p. 14, line 16–20).

In the German translation by L. Fekete it reads:

"Geschreiben wurden sei in Wien, in der Burg des glucklichen Romischen Kaisers im Jahre tausendsechshundertfunfzehn nach der Zeitrechnung der Majestat Jesu, am Afange des Montas Juli – Gegeben im ersten Drittel des Monats Džemazi-ul-ahir im Jahre tausendvierundzwanzig (and in the note below the text it is written: = 28. VI – 7. VII, 1615; op. cit.p. 222).

It is said that this contract had been written in Vienna on July the 1st 1615 of the Christian era, or in "eva'il" of cemaziyelahir 1024 of the Hegirian era. If the Christian era date, July 1st 1615, is correct, it means that this contract was written on the Hegirian era date which corresponds to July 1st 1615 of the Christian era. And that day is the fourth day of cemaziyelahir 1024. Consequently, here the expression "eva'il" cannot mean the first but only the fourth day of cemaziyelahir 1024, because that day coincides with July 1st 1615. Therefore, this example too absolutely discredits the thesis of G. Elezović, because instead of meaning the first day in a month, eva'il denotes the first decade of the month cemaziyelahir 1024, which lasted from June 28th to July 7th 1615.

If we were to assume that "eva'il" meant the first day, than the date of the Christian era should be June 28th 1615 instead of July 1st, because that day in June corresponds to 1st cemaziyelahir 1024. In doing so we would claim that the contract was made on June 28th instead on July 1st 1615 and that would mean that the Christian era date was wrong. Such an assumption, I think, would not be tolerated by G. Elezović himself even though it might endanger his thesis.

But, as I have already mentioned, there is something in this document which G. Elezović, I may say, could use as the third proof of his statement: that "eva'il" means only the first day in a month. Namely, when he found, for the sake of truth, as he says, that "one and only example" which could in a way support a different opinion, it would be fair to point to the same example which he thought he could use in favour of his thesis.

Namely, in the first item of the same contract it is said that the contract was written (made) on the first (gurre) of cemaziyelahir 1024. (p.8. line 18–24).

I am only drawing G. Elezović's attention to the same text, without any suggestions.



4. In the State Archives of Dubrovnik there are a few letters of the Hercegovina Sandjak-bey Musli-pasha. One of these letters (Acta Turcarum, Ser. B. file 23. No. 31) was sent by Musli-pasha, on behalf of the *Sandjak* of Hercegovina, to Dubrovnik from Gatačko polje (Sahra-i Gačka) on şaban 6th 1056 = August 15th 1649).

In that letter Musli-pasha wrote to the Dubrovnik officials that he had received a letter from them in Foča where he stayed overnight. He was hoping that a ferman for opening of a ferry would come and he said that he had already written two or three times about the same matter (to the Porta). He also said that he had come to Gatačko polje on saban 4th (August 13th), that he would stay there for a couple of days and that he would make a "dernek" and "džemijet" with the army of the Hercegovina sandžak which he had been given as an "arpaluk" as well as that he would stay at "muhafeza live" (guarding the Sanjak of Hercegovina). Further on, pasha said that he had not yet received the Dubrovnik ambassadors (el'ei) whom they had used to send to Hercegovina valias; he sent them his mataradžibasha Bali-basha, etc.

At the end of the letter there is the date: şaban 6th 1059 (August 15th 1649) and *be yurt sahra-i Gačka* (at Gatačko polje) as a denotation of the place where the letter was written.

At the same place (A. T. ser. B, file 23, No. 32) there follows another letter of Musli-pasha to Dubrovnik, concerning two Sarajevo merchants, Jozo and Niko Frenk, who were to obtain some fabrics for the pasha and to send them by his mataradži-basha, etc. This letter was also written at the same place, in the same year and month as the previous one. Only the date in the second letter was expressed like this:

"Tahrîren fi evâ'il-i şa'bân el-mu'azzam sene tis'a ve ħamsîne ve elf. — Be yurt sahra-i Gačka".

It means: Written in the first decade of the sublime şaban in 1059. (= 10—19 VIII 1649.) At Gatačko polje.

What does this entail? If Musli-pasha, in his first letter of şaban 6th 1059 (=August 15th 1649) says that he arrived to Gatačko polje on Friday, saban 4th 1059 (=August 13th 1649), then the other letter written in the first days of the same month and year, and at the same place, could not have been written before saban 4th 1054, when Musli-pasha arrived at Gatačko polje. Furthermore, the expression *eva'il* here cannot mean the first day in a month, but only the fourth, sixth or even some later day, and since this letter just as the letter of saban 6th 1059 mentions the Mataradži-basha, this letter could not have been written before şaban 6th.

On both of these letters there are signatures of G. Elezović, and since he certainly owns their copies, it is not necessary to present their facsimiles on this occasion, for it is quite improbable that anyone could doubt the correctness of my quotations. (See: Vl. Skarić, *Podaci za histo-*

riju Hercegovine od 1566. do sredine 17 vijeka, GZM XLIII, 1931 (2)p. 58)

5. In a original Sultan's berat (original owned by prof. H. Kreševljaković), that was addressed to Akmed Kemal-pasha, it is said that on sevval 8th 1169 (=July 6th 1756) he was promoted to the post of the Bosnian valia. At the end, the same berat was dated like this:

"Tahriren fi eva'il-i ševval el-mukerem sene tis'a ve sittine ve mije ve elf."

This means: Written in the first decade of the honourable sevval of 1169 (June 29th – July 8th 1756).

If Ahmed Kamil-pasha was nominated the Bosnian valia on sevval 8th 1169 (=July 6th 1756), then this berat which promotes him to this post, could not have been written before sevval 8th 1169. Consequently, here the expression evail cannot mean the first but only the eighth day of the month, regardless of any reasons or suggestions.

6. It is most inconvenient for G. Elezović that undeniable proofs against his statements are written precisely in the mentioned collection by L. Fekete. After he had already decided to attack the prevailing interpretation of the meaning of the expressions mentioned, he should have studied the question at least in the measure offered by the collection. For, if he had studied the collection carefully, he probably would not have let himself be misguided by his first impression or any other suggestions. This is why:

7. The first document in the mentioned collection is a Turkish text of the well-known peace contract between Sultan Ahmed I and Emperor Rudolph II at Židvatorok, from 1606. There is a date at the end of the document:

"Tahrir^{en} fi eva'il-i šehr-i redžeb el-muredžeb min šuhur-i sene hams ve 'ašere ve elf min el-hicret-i en-nebevijje 'aleyhi efdal et-tehiyye" (page 7.)

In German translation by L. Fekete it reads:

"Geschrieben im ersten Drittel des Monats des geehrten Redžeb des Jahres tausendundfünfzehn nach der Auswanerung des Propheten – mögen die ausgezeichnetsten Segnungen auf ihn fallen!" (page 213)

G. Elezović saw this date, he mentioned it several times, he brought its Turkish text and Fekete's German translation ; he showed how L. Fekete had put the date in the title of the document, how he had recalculated it under the text, aiming only to show that L. Fekete had also understood the expressions *eva'il*, *evahir* and *evasit* as month decades. Elezović saw all this but he failed to notice why L. Fekete who understood the mentioned expressions as decades, had written the date in the title of the document, on page 3 of his collection, like this:

"11th November 1606 – eva'il-ⁱ recep 1015" while in the notes on p.207. No.1. and on p.213. he said that eva'il-ⁱ recep meant 2–11 Nov. 1606."

G. Elezović did not wonder about that difference in dating the document; why had Fekete put that "Nov. 11th 1606" in the title corresponding to "eva'il-ⁱ recep 1015", when "Nov. 11th" did not denote any decade, as Fekete assumed, but a definite day, exactly as Mr. Elezović wanted.

Fekete did not do it by chance nor approximately but consciously and with a very strong reason: That document, as we have said, represents the Turkish text of the peace contract made at the Žitva estuary, having the date evail recep 1015.

If we suppose that Elezović is right and that the expression *eva'il* means only the first day in a month, then eva'il recep 1015 would mean "the first of recep 1015", and this in turn would mean "Nov. 2nd 1606" because recep 1st corresponds to Nov. 2nd.

In saying this we would claim that the well-known peace contract at the Žitva estuary was made on Nov. 2nd 1606. In that case however, we would not have orientalist and turkologist against us - because they do not claim that the expression *eva'il* cannot coincide with the first day in a month - but we would have all the historians against us, even good high school pupils, for they all know that the famous peace contract at the Žitva estuary was made on November 11th 1606.¹⁰

And that means the last of the first ten days, in the first decade of recep 1015 according to Hegira. It follows that the expression *eva'il* does not necessarily mean the first day in a month, but that it comprises the whole first decade, the first ten days of a month - in this case exactly the last, tenth day of the first decade of recep 1015. (= November 11th 1606.)

Elezović would perhaps try, even here, to search for something to support his thesis, e.g. that the historians were misguided when they claimed that the peace contract at the Žitva estuary had been made on November 11th, just as he had found that the European orientalist and turkologist had been misguided by Turkish dictionaries, by their "poor" Turkish language or whatever else. Against all this I shall only refer to the text of the same contract whose original is deposited in the same Archives, which says that this contract was made on November 11th 1606, as L. Fekete points out himself:

"Nach der ungarischen Fassung des Vertrages (Arch. Est., Bd.Xa, 9.) soll der Friede vom 11. Nov. 1606 an bestehen..."¹¹.

¹⁰ Compare, iex., St. Stanojević, *The History of the Serbian People*, Belgrade, 1908, p. 264, Vj. Klaić, *The History of the Croats*, Zagreb, 1911, Book III, p. 456.

¹¹ Compare L. Fekete, ditto, p. 211, note 2.

And now, may I be allowed, instead of any objections or marginal notes that could be put to Elezović's discussion, to finish this chapter with a paraphrase of one of his conclusions:

Even if this were the only example, it would be enough to dispel the mistake not on the part of the Western scientists, orientalist and turkologists, but on the part of Gliša Elezović, that *eva'il* can only mean the first day in a month. There is hardly a better example to show how G.Elezović, under different suggestions, could make ridiculous mistakes.

V

I think that I have given sufficiently clear, firm and irrefutable arguments showing that the expression *eva'il* in Turkish documents does not mean only the first day in an Arab month, but the first ten days, the first decade of a month, and that it can correspond to any day in that decade. Therefore, I could end this discussion. For, what applies for that expression analogously keeps for *evasit* and *evahir*.

Thus, since I showed that *eva'il* does not mean only the first day but the complete first decade, it is obvious that the expressions *evahir* and *evasit* do not denote the fifteenth or the last day in a month, but the second or the last decade of a month respectively. It is obvious to Elezović too. Convinced that he had proved that *eva'il* meant the first day in a month, he had not bothered to prove that the expression "evasit" meant the fifteenth and "evahir" the last day in a month. Thus, he wrote:

"Neither does *evasit* (plural of *vesat*) in the dates of papers and documents of Turkish administration denote the period between 11th and 20th day in a month, or, as learned people say, the second decade" (op.cit.p. 977.)

After such a statement, full of certainty and sarcasm, one expects at least such arguments as he had used to prove that *eva'il* meant only the first day in a month. And what does Elezović offer? He supports the above mentioned only by the two examples where he noticed that the expression *evasit* corresponded to the fifteenth day in a month. On the basis of one of these examples he concludes: "... that the example mentioned shows that in this case the expression *evasit* means the fifteenth day of that month and by no means a decade" which would cover about ten days, and on the basis of the second example he concludes "...that "evasit" is not a decade but the arithmetic mean of the month it stands with"(p. 978).

To such claims and proofs of G.Elezović I shall present the following:

1. The expression "evasit" is not plural of "vesat", but plural of "evsat".

2. No one has ever claimed that the expression "evasit" cannot coincide with exactly fifteenth day in a month, because that day belongs to the second decade just as every other day of that decade, and therefore, with these examples Elezović does not prove that the expression "evasit" means only the fifteenth day in a month nor the "arithmetic mean of the month it stands with", but he only proves that all the date corrections he made in Miklošić's, Truhelka's, Stojanović's and other texts must be rejected.

That it is really so, it is enough, I think, to mention only one example:

In an original ferman (the original owned by prof. H.Kreševljaković) it is said that Sultan Mustafa III, son of Sultan Ahmed III, accessed to the throne on Sunday, safer 16th 1171 (= October 30th 1757) and in the end of this ferman the date is written like this:

"Tahiren fi evasit-i safer el-hajr sene 1171". It means: Written about the middle of good safer of 1171 (= Oct. 25th – Nov. 3rd 1757). According to the Wüstenfeld-Mahler's parallel calendars, safer 16th 1171 was indeed on Sunday. Therefore, the expression *evasit* cannot mean the fifteenth, but it means not less than the sixteenth day in a month, so that this statement of G.Elezović must also be rejected.

VI

Of the same value and characteristics are the arguments which Elezović uses to "prove" that the expression *evahir* does not mean anything but the last day in a month and that it is synonymous with the expression *selh*. This is what G.Elezović writes about it:

"Finally, neither does *evahir* in Turkish documents, or its singular *ahir*, mean anything but the last day of the month it stands with, instead of what is generally accepted, that it denotes the last decade in an Arab month of a Hegirian year." When Naima, in the third volume of his history, on page 396, v.18, says: Mah-i-muḥarremiñ aḥirinde (1049) küsuf vaḳi'oldi (i.e. On the last day of Muharem a Moon eclipse happened), it means the same as if he used "evahirinde" instead of "ahirinde"

The expression *evahir* in this case is not plural of *āḥir*, but of *ehīr*. This is a difficult matter indeed, but when the author says that *ahir* and *evahir* are synonyms, then he goes beyond all bounds. The famous Turkish chronicler Na'ima would appear to be illiterate if he had, in the text mentioned used the expression *evahirinde* instead of the expression *ahirinde*. He knew that the expressions *ahir* and *evahir* are not synonyms; he knew the meaning of *ahir* and *evahir*, as well as that the eclipse of the Moon did not last for days but a day only. That is why he said *ahirinde*, which means on the last, instead of *evahirinde* which would mean the last ten days.

Let us go further. In order to prove that *evahir* does not mean the last decade, as it was generally accepted, but the last day in a month, Elezović gives only a few examples which, if understood correctly, clearly speak against his thesis, or only show that the expression *evahir* coincides with the last day in a month. He is convinced that he has completely proved his thesis. Thus, for example, as the strongest proof of his thesis, G.Elezović points to the *hujet-ferman* number 46 on page 174 (of his collection) in which the date reads: "fe *evahir-i şaban* sene ihda ve *semanine ve semane mije*".(i.e. on Dec. 17th 1476, after the Dubrovnik ambassadors Janko Bunić and Paladin (Lukarević) payed 10 000 golden Venetian ducats as an annual tax to the imperial *hazna* on the 24th day of *saban* in the Hegirian 881 (Dec. 12th 1476) (p.979).

This is how Elezović interprets this expression:

"It would be senseless to suppose that the office of the imperial *Porta* would record an event whose date of occurrence was of great importance, with an expression which did not mean anything definite, but only a certain time period of ten days".

And this is quite right. But someone might possibly observe: would it not be more senseless for Dubrovnik ambassadors to give 10 000 ducats to the imperial *hazna* on *şaban* 24th 881 and to get the certificate not before the last day of *şaban* of the same year. G.Elezović would have no right to be angry about such an objection, whether it is correct or not, especially when, after making such a conclusion, he does not say anything about the usual procedure of the *Porta* on the occasion of taking the tax and giving certificates for it.

Nevertheless, all these are a matter of different opinions, so let us see the facts. The point of the problem, in this example, I think, is less in what seems senseless to Elezović, than in something which he suppressed in his explanation as absolutely unimportant. In fact, from the text of the *hujet-ferman*, it can be noted that there are two dates in it. One, *şaban* 24th, absolutely definite, which denotes when the Dubrovnik ambassadors delivered the tax to the treasury, and the other, *evahir-i şaban*, which, understood as indefinite, would mean *şaban* 24th – 30th and as definite (according to Elezović), it would only mean *şaban* 30th as the date when the certificate was given. I think that the two dates are not of equal importance, and, that, for the imperial office, the event whose date was of particular importance is the day when *haraç* was payed - and that event was dated precisely with "şaban 24th", - and not the day when Dubrovnik ambassadors were given the certificate. So, this is what G.Elezović overlooked in this example and that is why he could use it to support his thesis and derive a wrong conclusion.

Thus, we have explained why Elezović's proof is in its essence good but wrongly applied, and why its explanation would be less suitable than the above objection which could be made. So we come to another problem

which should be explained here. Later on, I shall try to say something about it as well.

From these remarks to Elezović's proof mentioned it can be concluded that it is not useful either. Owing to Elezović, we have at our disposal plenty of suchlike hudžet-fermans or certificates of Dubrovnik tax payments. From this it can be seen that the procedure varied in respect of time. There are examples when the imperial office gave certificates on the same day the harač was payed. There are examples when it happened the day after, but also those when it was delayed for five, ten or fifteen days or even a month or two. Consequently, it cannot be concluded whether the above assumption of G.Elezović is senseless or not, and according to the example he quotes - if we suppose that the expression *evahir* means the last decade - Dubrovnik could have got the certificate on şaban 24th when they delivered the tax, or on the last day of şaban, as Mr.Elezović wants it, but also on any other day between these two dates. Anyhow, it is evident that these two examples cannot be used to prove that the expression *evahir* means the last day, even if we know for certain that Dubrovnik got the certificate exactly on şaban 30th, because it also belongs to the last decade of the month.

After all this, I think that it would be more suitable, instead of separate analyses of his other proofs which do not prove his statement at all, to give a few examples that will, I hope, persuade him that his statements about the meaning of the expression *evahir* are not acceptable either.

1. In an old transcritpion of Kuran (Oriental Institute, No.15), the date of the transcription at the end is written like this:

"Kad veka'a el-feragu min hazihi 'l-mushaf eš-šerifi fi tarih ihda ve tis'ine ve elf fi evahir šeh-r-i muharrem el-haram fi jevm el-hamis fi vakt ez zuhr."

It means: Transcription of this honourable mushaf ended on Thursday at noon, in the last decade of the holy month muharrem in the year 1091.

According to the Wüstenfeld-Mahler's calendars, the last day of muharrem 1091 was on Saturday, March 2nd 1680. Therefore, here the expression *evahir* cannot mean the last day in a month either, but either 21st or 28th because these days in the last decade of this month were Thursdays, while the 30th was Saturday.

2. In an old Arab manuscript in the collection of Muhamed Hadžijamaković, now in the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo (No. 46) there is the date of the transcription in the end:

"Jevm el-hamis kubejl ez-zuhr fi evahir-i zi'l-ka'de min šuhur-i senete isna ve sittine ve elf".

It means: (transcribed) on Thursday, before noon, in the last decade of the month zilkade in 1062 (Oct. 24th – Nov. 2nd 1652).

In the last decade of zilkade 1062 there were two Thursdays — one on 21st and the other on 28th zilkade 1062. Accordingly, the expression *evahir* cannot mean the last day in that month, but either 21st or 28th and by no means 30th. But even these examples of ours, if alone, might be open to discussion, especially because of the frequent disparity of dates which is often found in manuscripts, as I have already pointed out. That is why it is necessary to mention, at least one more example, in order to support the above mentioned ones and to eliminate any further discussion.

3. In the collection mentioned (No. 17), on pages 429–430. L. Fekete brings a shortened translation of one of the *fermans* which, in his edition, literally reads:

”Konstantinopel, 30. Juni 1625 — 24 Ramadan 1034. Ferman des Sultans Murad IV. betrifft der Lehensgüter Mehmeds, des Derkjäh-čauš.

Da Mehmed, der Derkjäh-čauš, der einen Schenkungsbrief auf ein Zi’amet—Lehen mit einem Ertrag von 53.100 Akče in den Sandžaks Ofen, Bejšehri und Akšehir, in dem Nahije Pest im Dorfe Sölöš und anderswo jedoch Güter nur mit einem Ertrag von 44.499 Akče besitzt, um das durch die Abdankung Mustafas im Sandžak Ofen, in dem Nahije Kečkemet und anderswo herrelos gewordene Lehen angesucht hat, ist ihm dies mit Erlass vom 21. — 30. Ramadan 1034¹² geschenkt worden. Nachdem ihm auch das Ziamet-Lehen Mehmeds, des Sohnes vom ‘Ali, eines Derkjäh-müterferrikas, der wegen des Gutes Szolloz in dem Nahije von Pest gegen Mehmed Čauš einen Prozess geführt hat, nach der Abdankung Mehmed Čauš Geschenkt worden ist, wird das letztere mit von ihm bisher innegehabten Zi’amet-Gütern, deren Ertrag mit 49.999 Akče festgesetzt ist, vereinigt mit der Bemerkung, dass er auch weiterhin Derkjäh-Čauš und zugleich Su-baši jener Gegend bleiben werde.”

In the berat of ramazan 24th 1034, it is said that, by the berat of ramazan 21st—30th 1034, a certain property was assigned to *dergah-čauš* Mehmed. G. Elezović will certainly agree with us that in Fekete’s extract from this berat the phrase ”21st—30th ramazan” stands instead of the expression ”*evahiri ramazan*”. So if we wanted that expression to mean the last, the 30th day of that month, as Elezović wants it, then we would claim that in the berat from ramazan 24th 1034 it was written that this *dergah-čauš* was given something by the berat from ramazan 30th 1034.

Those who claim so can also understand and interpret the expressions *eva’il*, *evasit* and *evahir*, as Gliša Elezović has understood and interpreted them so far. I say so far, because I hope that he will not do so hereafter, or that, at least, he would not ask others to do so. However, this is his own concern, but I would not like to be challenged to criticise his works in turkology and oriental studies in general any more.

¹² June 27th — July 6th, 1625 (The remark of L. Fekete).

VII

Now we might also consider other parts of the mentioned discussion of G.Elezović. It can be briefly said that, although the conclusions regarding the main question are completely wrong, there is a valuable contribution to science in the column where Elezović classifies different Turkish monuments according to whether they are dated (completely or partially) or they do not have a date at all. That is, in my opinion, his contribution to science in this discussion. Although quite small, it can serve as an orientation to those who begin to study Turkish monuments. But let me consider another question which the reader could be faced with, which also puzzled Elezović. How is it possible that the Turks had such a good administration, which G.Elezović points out, and yet used such an imperfect way of dating as the dating with month decades? My answer to this question, based on the general impression of my previous study of Turkish documents regarding other subjects, can be summarized and generalized in this way: In ancient times, the Turks had indeed a good administration, and this "imperfect" way of dating with decades does not impair its reputation at all, because they never used it in the cases when that imperfection could cause any ambiguities, but only when the date of a document was not of great importance for the juridical matter produced by the given written document. Thus, for example, cadis, in their *sicils*, very often for a whole month or two, almost without exception, used to put only the expressions *eva'il*, *evahir* and *evasit* to denote days in their documents. If we wanted these expressions to mean the first, the fifteenth or the last day in a month, we would then suppose that these cadis worked only three days in the whole month: 1st, 14th or 15th and 29th or 30th, that they did not work on the other days, and that in these three days they carried out thousands of trials, registered and completed hundreds of other affairs which they recorded in their *sigils* (*sicil*). Although the cadis' sigils abound in such examples which deny Elezović's statements, I did not want to use them because they did not seem strong enough for it. Namely, I have an impression that cadis did not record in their sigils all the cases in the moment when they were completed in court, but they used to collect them and write them down into sigils at one time, not always respecting the chronological order of their occurrence. But this is not our prime concern here. It is important

here to point out that, besides all that, in the same sigils, among and besides all these *eva'îls*, *evahirs* and *evasits*, there are some sorts of acts without these expressions, which are always dated quite precisely. Such is the case with all the documents where the nature of juridical matter concerned did not permit any indefinite date but demanded a precise dating of the documents. That is the case with all the documents where each day is juridically relevant. Thus, for example, the acts which establish the base, source and amount of alimony for divorced women, adolescent fatherless children etc. are, without exception, precisely dated. The same applies to all the acts of financial nature in which certain rights, incomes or claims are related to a certain time-limit and in which the date may have some importance.

However, when it is the question of matters in which the date is of less or of no importance, then it does not have to be complete (if it is put at all). Thus, for example, in the case when Elezović found his "tailor-made" proof, he overlooked the fact that there is no juridical aspect in that contract which would demand precise dating within these ten days. A similar thing occurs in the first act of L.Fekete's collection which represents the Turkish text of an extremely important contract, the Žitva estuary peace contract from 1606. At the end of this contract the date is expressed only with the expression *eva'îl*, but this date denotes only the day when the contract was signed. But, in the text of the same contract, there is one more date, expressed according to the Christian and Islam calendars. In the Islamic manner, this date was not expressed by any of the three Arab expressions mentioned showing that the date was not precise. Why? Because this is the date when the contract became effective. In the twelfth article of the contract it is written that the contract becomes effective on recep 1st 1015 of Hegira and from the beginning of November 1606 of the Cristian era, and that it will hold for 20 years. (op.cit.,p. 5, line 15–21). Here the Turks considered it necessary to put the exact date leaving the final one, as G.Elezović said, to refer to any of the last ten days. That is also the case with the receipts given to Dubrovnik after the tax payment. There, the dates of reception of taxes were, as a rule, precisely recorded, while the date when the receipt was given was often recorded incompletely.

In the second act of the collection mentioned, which represents a renewal of the peace contract from the year 1606, signed on July 1st 1615 of the civil era and *eva'îl cemaziyelahir* 1024 of the Hegira (= June

28th – July 7th 1615) there is a regulation in the first article that the contract will become effective on cemaziyelahir 1st, 1024 (= June 28th 1615) and will be valid for 20 years from that day. Thus, when the Turks wanted to state when the contract would become effective they expressed the day precisely, while in the date showing when the contract was signed they expressed the date in decades.

In the fourth act of the mentioned collection by L.Fekete which represents an argument between the Emperor's and Sultan's representatives about solving some disputable questions, it is written in the end that the contract was made on May 1st of the year 1616 and on rebiyülahir 2nd of the year 1025 according to Hegira. But rebiyülahir corresponds to April 19th 1616, so that this date, according to the Hegirian era, is antedated by 30 days, or according to the Julian calendar, it is antedated by two days (L.Fekete, op.cit.p. 225. note 1).

I would like to point out that these observations should, for the time being, be taken only as a result of my general impression acquired through studying Turkish documents, and not as a result of a specialised research into this subject.

R e z i m e

IZRAZI EVAİL, EVASIT I EVAHIR U DATUMIMA TURSKIH SPOMENIKA

Ovaj rad nastao je povodom rasprave Gliše Elezovića *Islamsko računanje vremena i datuma u turskim spomenicima*. Rasprava je objavljena kao sastavni dio djela Gliše Elezovića *Turski spomenici*. Knj. I, sv. 1, 944–980. Islamski narodi su svoje spomenike datirali prema muslimanskom kalendaru koji se računa po hidžretskoj eri, a koja počinje 15. ili 16. jula 622. godine kršćanske ere. Kod datiranja islamskih, pa i turskih spomenika može se u načelu razlikovati potpuno i nepotpuno datiranje, ali ovaj rad nema za cilj da raspravlja o tome. Ovdje je osnova rasprave o datiranju spomenika slučaj kada se za oznaku datuma u mjesecu upotrijebi jedan od tri navedena arapska izraza u naslovu ovoga rada. Odnosno kad se mjeseci dijele na dekade pa se označi da je određeni spomenik napisan u prvoj, drugoj ili trećoj dekadi.

Ovakvo datiranje je vrlo često kako u dokumentima administracije tako i u rukopisima. Kako su gotovo svi orijentalisti i uopće svi islamski naučnici složni u tome da izrazi *evail*, *evasit* i *evahir* označavaju tri dekade u mjesecu gotovo da nema potrebe da se o tome raspravlja. Međutim,

Gliša Elezović je u svojoj raspravi osporio to pravo svima onima koji su tako shvatali te izraze, sa tvrdnjom da ti izrazi znače *prvi, petnaesti i dvadeset deveti* ili *trideseti* dan u mjesecu i da je jedino tako ispravno preračunavati hidžretske datume na građanski kalendar. U ovom radu pokušalo se na osnovu velikog broja autoriteta i velikog broja arhivskih i književnih spomenika dokazati da Gliša Elezović nije u pravu, pogotovo da nema pravo tražiti od drugih naučnika da prihvate njegovo pogrešno mišljenje. Prema tome izraz *evail* označava prvu dekadu s tim da može označavati i prvi dan u mjesecu. Izraz *evasit* označava drugu dekadu s tim da može označavati i petnaesti dan u mjesecu, a izraz *evahir* označava treću dekadu, s tim da taj izraz može značiti i posljednji dan te dekade odnosno zadnji dan u mjesecu. Ako se desi da se ovi izrazi podudare sa prvim, petnaestim ili dvadeset devetim ili tridesetim danom u mjesecu to nije nikakav dokaz da ti izrazi znače isključivo te datume. Za te datume upotrebljavaju se drugi izrazi i to *gurre* i *mustehell* za prvi dan, *muntesaḥ* za petnaesti dan i *sehl* ili *ahir* za zadnji dan u mjesecu. Mislimo da smo na osnovu navedenih brojnih dokaza u potpunosti dokazali da Gliša Elezović nije u pravu, da se njegovo mišljenje ne može prihvatiti od strane onih koji se bave turskim spomenicima i da se mora biti oprezan o preračunavanju hidžretskih datuma od strane Gliša Elezovića u njegovom navedenom djelu.

S u m m a r y

THE EXPRESSIONS EVA'IL, EVASIT AND EVAHIR IN THE DATES OF TURKISH MONUMETS (DOCUMENTS)

The subject of this paper is Gliša Elezović's treatise, *Islamic Reckoning of Time and Dates in Turkish Monuments (Documents)*. The treatise is published as a part of Gliša Elezović's collection, *Turkish Monuments*, Vol. I, part 1, pp. 944–980. In dating their monumets, the Islamic peoples used the Muslim calendar which reckoned time according to the Hegirian era which began on July 15th or 16th, 622, in relation to the Christian era.

In dating Islamic monuments, including Turkish, a distinction can be made between complete and the incomplete dating, but this article has no intention of discussing that problem. This paper is concerned with the case when one of the three Arabic expressions mentioned in the title is used to denote the date of a month, i.e. when the months are divided into decades and it is noted that the document in question is written in the first, second or third decade.

This way of dating is quite frequent both in administrative documents and in manuscripts. Since nearly all orientalisists, and all Islamic scholars in general, agree that the expressions *eva'il*, *evasit* and *evahir*

denote the three decades of the month, then there is no need to discuss this problem. But, Gliša Elezović, having criticized in his treatise all those scholars who understood and interpreted the mentioned expressions as month decades, states that those expressions meant the 1st, 15th, and 29th or 30th day of a given month and that it was the only correct way of converting the Hegirian dates into the Christian calendar. This article, based on a great number of authorities and on a considerable quantity of archives and literary documents, aim to demonstrate that Gliša Elezović is wrong, and especially that he has no right to demand that his incorrect interpretation be accepted by scholars. Therefore, the expression *eva'il* denotes both the first decade and the first day of the month. The expression *evasit* denotes the second decade, as well as the fifteenth day of the month; and the expression *evahir* denotes the third decade, and the last day of that decade, i.e. the last day of the month. If so it happens that mentioned expressions coincide with the 1st, 15th or 29th or 30th day of the month it is not a proof that those expressions denote those days exclusively. Other expressions are used to denote those days, i.e. *gurre* and *mustehell* for the first day, *muntəsaf* for the 15th day, and *sehl* or *āhir* for the last day of a month. We think that we have, on the bases of numerous arguments cited, thoroughly proved Gliša Elezović wrong, and that his opinion cannot be accepted by scholars who specialize in Turkish documents, and also that one has to be cautious when using Gliša Elezović's conversion of the Hegirian dates into the Christian in his above mentioned collection.