

IGNAZ GOLDZIHNER'S INVITATION TO THE EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY*

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The foundation of the Egyptian University – present-day Cairo University –, the first modern secular university on Egyptian soil, was a landmark of historic significance in the cultural history of the country. It opened on December 21, 1908 in a rented mansion belonging to the Greek cigarette magnate Nestor Gianclis and others¹. The recruitment of a suitable teaching staff was not easy and the employment of European professors was also envisaged right from the beginning. Interim professors were also invited from Europe to deliver courses of lectures for shorter periods, e.g. one academic year. They could be conveniently arranged into two groups: those who lectured in French or English on topics unrelated to the Middle East, such as French or English literature or world history, and the Orientalists, who lectured in Arabic on Arab and Islamic subjects². The heads of the fledgling University, principally its Rector, Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād, made efforts to secure the cooperation of some well-known authorities of high reputation. The Prince played a key role in the organization of the University: he became its first Rector at its opening as a private institution in 1908, and in 1925, already as king, he refounded it as a fully-fledged state institution (Reid 1990:1). In the pre-war days the Prince was simply one of the numerous members of the ruling family, the descendants of Muḥammad 'Alī, who had been mainly known for his eventful marriage with Princess Šuwaykār. Owing to the totally unpredictable and unforeseen turns of history, however, he was to become Sultan (1917) and even later King of Egypt as Fu'ād I (1922) (Kāmil 1998:10-31; Goldschmidt Jr. 2000:59-60). He also approached Ignaz Goldziher of Budapest University and made several efforts to invite him to Cairo as visiting professor. He did his best to gain the cooperation of Goldziher and persuade him to come to Cairo. He even used his connections to certain members of the ruling dynasty and the political leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to exert pressure upon Goldzi-

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¹ The building, where the University stayed until 1915, is now the central building of the American University in Cairo in downtown Taḥrīr square. It was built around 1870, then it was acquired by the Greek cigarette magnate Nestor Gianclis, who had it transformed to its present-day Mamluk revival form. The architect of the transformation was Max Herz, who was universally regarded as the greatest authority on Mamluk revival and who himself played an important role in the propagation and dissemination of this style in Egypt. See Ormos 2001:169-170.

² See Reid 1990:37-42.

her. This they did, no doubt because they were quick to realize how important Goldziher's eventual professorship might be in raising the Egyptian presence of Hungary and the whole Monarchy – it can be regarded as an essential constituent of imperialist aspirations that the European powers, among them the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, competed with each other fiercely to assert their presence in the field of Egyptian cultural life³. In the end these efforts did not bear fruit, Goldziher did not go to Egypt, and so, as far as the University was concerned, "Austria-Hungary lost its chance when Ignaz Goldziher turned down Fuad's invitation to teach" (Reid 1990:37-38). Among the letters of Max Herz to Ignaz Goldziher, which are preserved in the Goldziher Correspondence in the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest, there are several items dealing with this subject⁴. In the present paper, these letters will be reviewed in connection with other sources with the aim of shedding light on the details of this intermezzo.

Max Herz (1856-1919), the Hungarian chief architect to the *Comité de Conservation des Monuments de l'Art Arabe* in Cairo for a quarter of a century (1890-1914)⁵, came into contact with Ignaz Goldziher in 1895 and soon they became good friends. The letters Herz wrote to Goldziher contain a wealth of information on various subjects⁶.

In the first letter on this subject Herz states explicitly that it was he who first suggested to the organizers that they invite Goldziher⁷, who was universally regarded as the greatest European authority on Islam of his time, but then it was Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād, who undertook to persuade Goldziher to accept the invitation to deliver the course "History of Philosophical Doctrines" (*Histoire des Doctrines Philosophiques / il corso di storia delle dottrine filosofiche*) at the Egyptian University for one winter semester beginning on 15 November 1911⁸. In his letter of 16 July 1911, the Prince mentions that they had personally met in Athens, where Goldziher's behaviour had

³ Reid 1985; Reid 1990:37-42; Reid 1992. On Austro-Hungarians in Egypt in this period see the contributions by Rudolf Agstner and Marcella Stern in Agstner 1994 and *Österreich und Ägypten* 1993.

⁴ On the Correspondence see [Anon.] 1933. Somogyi 1935:149-150.

⁵ Herz arrived in Cairo in 1880 and joined the Technical Bureau of the Waqf Administration, where he worked as architect until his appointment to the post of chief architect to the *Comité*. See Ormos 2001.

⁶ On Max Herz's letters to Goldziher see Ormos 2001:172. Goldziher's replies do not survive: they seem to have perished together with Herz's belongings after his expulsion from Egypt as an enemy alien at the outbreak of World War I in 1914.

⁷ Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 6 January 1911.

⁸ See Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

led the Prince to hope that Goldziher might deliver the course in question⁹. At the beginning confidential feelers were put out by Herz, and then in the later phases of the undertaking, when Archduke Franz Ferdinand, crown prince of Austria-Hungary, and Count Széchenyi, the diplomatic representative of Austria-Hungary in Cairo, joined the unofficial negotiations, Herz acted as a sort of intermediary between the Prince and Goldziher – Herz's role is also attested to by Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād's letter to Goldziher where he refers to Goldziher's first answer to Herz Bey on this matter¹⁰. After some hesitation, Goldziher seems to have turned down the invitation, yet Herz did his best to convince him of the advantages and desirability of such a stay in Cairo. Goldziher seemed to have had objections, which Herz strove to allay giving details concerning the visits of such acquaintances of Goldziher as Guidi¹¹, Santillana¹², Nallino¹³ and Littmann¹⁴. He reminds Goldziher that he would be in a good company among such persons as Littmann, Nallino and Snouck Hurgronje¹⁵. In one case Herz copied for Goldziher an Italian letter by Fago, Prince Aḥmad Fu'ād's secretary, on this subject¹⁶. This latter letter shows how important

⁹ See Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

¹⁰ Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated Karlsbad 19.9.1911.

¹¹ Ignazio Guidi (1844-1935). See Fück 1955:220-222. Reid 1990:39.

¹² David Santillana (1855-1921). See Levi della Vida 1921-1930.

¹³ Carlo Alfonso Nallino (1872-1938) held an important course on the history of Arab astronomy, in Arabic, at the Egyptian University in 1909-1910, which also appeared in print. See Meyerhof 1939. Fück 1955:299-301. Reid 1990:2, 39, 41-42, 52 (ill. 3), 95, 153-154.

¹⁴ Enno Littmann (1875-1958) of Germany lectured on Comparative Semitic Languages and Literatures in 1910-1912 and returned as visiting professor in 1929. It may be remarked that Littmann reckoned Goldziher among the founders of Islamic studies in 1930 but omitted to mention his name in his overview of contributions in German to Near Eastern studies published in the days of National Socialism in 1942. Goldziher-Hartmann, *Correspondence* xxvi² (editor's Introduction); Reid 1990:2, 41, 95. On him see Paret 1959.

¹⁵ Snouck Hurgronje had also been invited to the Egyptian University in Cairo but he too did not go there. I owe this piece of information to P. S. van Koningsveld. Cf. Goldziher-Snouck Hurgronje, *Correspondence* 357-360. See also Reid 1990:38. In his letter of 28 July 1911 (Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*) Mr. Fago informs *illustre e carissimo Herz Bey* that – among others – Snouck Hurgronje has agreed to go to Cairo: *Il principe Fuad a ottenuto l'accettazione del prof. Littmann, del prof. Snouck Hurgronje di Leiden e dei professori italiani (Nallino & Meloni)*. Gerardo Meloni taught on the history of the ancient Near East. See Reid 1990:39.

¹⁶ Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter of Fago dated Paris, 28 July 1911 (the original); Vetriolo (Trento), 4 August 1911 (the copy by Herz). Dr. Vincenzo Fago was sent to Cairo by the Italian government, accompanying a donation of 500 books. He went to Cairo from the University of Rome. His task was the organization and the administration of the University Library. See Reid 1990:39. He was also "international secretary" to the Prince. Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letters of Herz dated Cairo, 26 May

Goldziher was in the prince's eyes because he asks Herz to do everything possible (and impossible) to persuade Goldziher accept the invitation:

"My Dear Herz Bey, to come to the point at once, I am asking you most fervently in the name of His Highness Prince Fuad to be so kind as to do everything possible (and even impossible) in order that Prof. Goldziher may consent to come to the Egyptian University on November 15th of this year to deliver the course on the history of philosophical doctrines in Arabic."

Illustre e carissimo Herz Bey, senza preambuli, La prego caldissimamente da parte di S. A. il Principe Fuad di voler fare tutto il possibile (e anche l'impossibile!) perchè il prof. Goldziher accetti di venire il 15 novembre di quest'anno all'Università Egiziana, per tenervi in lingua araba, il corso di storia delle dottrine filosofiche.

In the course of this discussion Herz Pasha informs Goldziher that the subject he is supposed to lecture on was taught by Santillana in the previous academic year. Santillana arrived in Cairo with the fair copy of the text of his lectures but to his great distress he discovered that these lectures were pitched way over his students' heads, so he was compelled to rewrite them from day to day¹⁷. Herz also mentions that Guidi was sometimes compelled to make use of some sort of a translator to make himself understood:

"I have no doubts concerning your facility in Arabic. Prof. Guidi was sometimes compelled to make use of some sort of a translator in order to make himself understood. But of course Guidi has never been in the Orient before, while you have been here years. You can choose as you like: literary or colloquial Arabic. But I want you to ask Nallino for his opinion and suggestion concerning this matter."

Ich zweifle nicht an Dein arab. Sprachvermögen. Prof. Guidi mußte sich einer Art Dolmetscher bedienen, um sich manchmal verständlich zu machen. Aber Guidi war ja nie im Orient. Du hast ja Jahre hier verbracht. Dann kannst Du, wie Du willst, wählen: litterarisch oder vulgäraryabisch. Aber diesbezüglich möchte ich doch, daß Du Nallinos Rat u. Meinung einholst¹⁸.

This correspondence goes on for a while but it is known that in the end Goldziher did not accept the invitation and did not go to Cairo¹⁹. In a letter to Prince Fu'ād he informs the prince that "his professional duties do not allow him to leave his chair vacant for several consecutive months"²⁰. In a letter to Theodor Nöldeke dated Budapest, 9th November 1911 Goldziher tells his colleague and friend in strict

and Milan, 23 June 1911.

¹⁷ Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26 May 1911.

¹⁸ Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26. 5. 1911.

¹⁹ Goldziher-Herz, *Correspondence*. Letter from Herz dated Cairo, 26 May 1911. Cf. Goldziher, *Tagebuch* 269-271, 274; Goldziher, *Oriental Diary* 51-52.

²⁰ Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. The draft of Goldziher's answer enclosed with the letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16.7.1912 [recte 1911].

confidence of all the stress this affair has caused him and why he does not want to accept the invitation:

"The kind forwarding of your study on Schulthess' version of *Kalilah wa-Dimnah*²¹ is an exhortation to me to send you once again a written greeting after such a long time. This was postponed from day to day because in recent weeks I was so agitated at heart that I hardly found the mood for communicativeness. I would like to hint at the cause of this mental condition in strict confidence. About nine months ago I received an invitation in a semi-official way to give a course of lectures on philosophy at the new university in Cairo in the following winter. These invitations were then followed in August by a most obliging letter from Prince Fuad Pasha²², in which I was urgently pressed to accept the invitation. I replied that I was unable to comply with the respectful appeal. Then in the middle of October the prince himself came from Vienna to Budapest accompanied by two companions "pour me convaincre". In an intercourse that lasted for hours with the amiable grandson of Muhammad 'Ali and his kind companions I was attacked in a most forcible way to give a binding consent. No matter how flattering the importance that the Egyptians attached to my personal participation and how attractive the task offered to me, after impartial and calm self-examination, I found myself unable to accede to the request. Now I am too old to catapult myself all of a sudden into strange surroundings, to subject myself to the task of preparation from one lecture to the other and finally to be compelled by the delicate nature of the subject to be constantly on my guard not to cause offence in matters of religion (cf. Vollers-Algiers)²³. In addition I have the impression that the urgent character of the invitation is based on an overestimation of my qualities caused by the indulgence of my friends. I informed the prince that *for the time being* it was impossible for me but I thought I owed to the obligingness of this person, so kindly disposed towards me, the consideration of not cutting the thread once and for all. *J'y réfléchirai*: on this we parted. But with that the affair is not settled, not even provisionally. Ten days ago I received an official communication from our prime minister, Count Khuen²⁴, in which he strongly recommends that I accede to the invitation: the state secretary at our Ministry of Education informs me simultaneously that a note of identical content has reached the Hungarian

²¹ *Kalila und Dimna*. Syrisch und deutsch von Friedrich Schulthess. Berlin 1911.

²² Goldziher-Aḥmad Fu'ād, *Correspondence*. Letter from Aḥmad Fu'ād dated London 16 July 1912 [recte 1911].

²³ Karl Vollers (1857-1909) was director of the Khedivial Library in Cairo from 1886 until 1896, when he was appointed professor at Jena University. Fück 1955:240. At the 14th Congress of Orientalists at Algiers, Vollers' paper on the language of the Qur'ān displeased Muslim participants so he withdrew it from publication. Cf. Goldziher-Hartmann, *Correspondence* 228-229.

²⁴ Goldziher-Khuen-Héderváry, *Correspondence*. Letter from Khuen-Héderváry dated 16.10.1911. The draft of Goldziher's answer is enclosed: he replies to the polite letter from the prime minister that "his personal conditions do not enable him to accept the gratifying invitation at present, but he will keep considering the possibility of taking another standpoint in the future" (personal pronouns altered by me - I.O.). Count Károly Khuen-Héderváry (1849-1918), conservative politician, prime minister of Hungary (1903, 1910-1912).

Minister of Education from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Aehrenthal²⁵. I do not need to tell you that being pressed like this causes me enormous agitation. It is only under quiet and steady conditions that I can work and smooth away – as far as possible – the marks adhering to me from my past. Now I feel that mentally I am not fit – at least for the time being – for the task offered to me and thus I feel I cannot follow the advice pressing upon me. But the many discussions in connection with this cause me palpitation of the heart. I am only just equal to the tasks I have to fulfil every day; but I have the strongest and most serious doubts whether I would also be equal to the tasks I would have to confront in Egypt. In one word: doubts and more doubts, which must necessarily result in a negative decision in the end. This all strictly confidentially.”

Die gütige Zusendung Ihrer Studie über Schulthess' Kalila wa-Dimnah-Bearbeitung ist mir eine Mahnung, Ihnen nach langer Zeit wieder einen schriftlichen Gruss zu senden. Dieser ist von Tag zu Tag verschoben worden, weil ich in den letzten Wochen innerlich so aufgereggt war, dass ich kaum die Stimmung zur Mittheilbarkeit finden konnte. Ich möchte Ihnen die Ursache dieser Seelenlage im Vertrauen andeuten. Schon seit etwa ¾ Jahren habe ich von Kairo aus in halbamtlicher Form die Aufforderung erhalten, an der dortigen neuen Universität während des jetzt einziehenden Winters einen Vorlesungskurs über Philosophie zu geben. Diesen Einladungen folgte dann im August d. J. ein überaus verbindlicher Brief an mich vom Prinzen Fuad Pascha, in welchem mir die Angelegenheit aufs dringendste ans Herz gelegt wird. Ich antwortete, dass es mir jetzt nicht möglich ist, der ehrenden Aufforderung Folge zu leisten. Mitte Oktober kam nun der Prinz mit zwei Begleitern von Wien aus persönlich nach Budapest "pour me convaincre". In stundenlangem Verkehr mit dem lebenswürdigen Enkel des Muhammed 'Ali und seinen lieben Begleitern wurde mir nun in überaus eindringlicher Weise an den Leib gegangen um eine bindende Zusage von mir zu erlangen. So schmeichelhaft für mich nun auch der Wert ist, den die Aegypter auf meine persönliche Mitwirkung legen und so sehr sympathisch mir auch die angebotene Aufgabe ist, konnte ich bei unparteilich ruhiger Selbstprüfung mich zu einer Zustimmung für meine Person nicht entschliessen. Ich bin nun zu alt, um mich urplötzlich in ein fremdes Milieu zu werfen, den Arbeiten der Vorbereitung von Stunde zu Stunde mich zu unterziehen und am Ende auch noch immer auf der Hut sein zu müssen, bei der heiklen Natur des Themas nicht auch religiöse Anstöße zu erregen (cf. Vollers-Alger). Überdies scheint mir der dringliche Character der Einladung auf eine durch Nachsicht meiner Freunde hervorgerufene Überschätzung meiner Qualitäten zu beruhen. Ich gab dem Prinzen den Bescheid, dass es mir für jetzt unmöglich sei, glaubte aber der Zuverlässigkeit des mir in so lebenswürdiger Weise entgegenkommenden Herrn die Rücksicht schuldig zu sein, den Faden für alle Zukunft nicht abzuschneiden. J'y réfléchirai: damit schieden wir. Die Sache ist aber damit auch provisorisch nicht abgeschlossen. Vor zehn Tagen erhielt ich eine Zuschrift unseres Ministerpraesidenten Grafen Khuen, in welcher er mir nahe legt, der Einladung Folge zu leisten; gleichzeitig teilt mir der Staatssekretär unseres Unterrichtsministeriums mit, dass vom Minister des Aeussern, Graf Aehrenthal eine Note gleichen Sinnes an den ungarischen Unterrichtsminister gelangt sei. Ich brauche Ihnen nicht zu sagen, dass mir dieses Gepresstwerden ungeheure Aufregung verursacht. Nur unter ruhigen gleichmässigen Verhältnissen kann ich arbeiten und die Striemen, die mir aus meiner Vergangenheit anhaften, so weit es möglich ist, wegglatzen. Ich fühle mich nun für die mir angebotene Aufgabe, wenigstens für jetzt, innerlich nicht geeignet und kann da – so

²⁵ Among Balogh's letters to Goldziher there is none relating to this affair. Goldziher-Balogh, *Correspondence*. Count Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal (1854-1912), Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy from 1906 until 1912.

fühle ich es – den an mich herandrängenden Ratschlägen nicht folgen. Aber das viele Antworten darüber macht mir Herzklopfen und Aufregung. Ich bin den Aufgaben, die ich tagtäglich erfülle, zur Not gewachsen; habe aber den stärksten und ernstesten Zweifel daran, ob ich es auch der mir entgegengebrachten ägyptischen Aufgabe wäre. Mit einem Wort: Bedenken und Bedenken und Bedenken, deren Resultat zum Schluss in ein negatives Urteil auslaufen muss. Dies alles im Vertrauen²⁶.

The polite letter from prime minister Khuen-Héderváry to Goldziher is extant with the draft of Goldziher's answer enclosed: he informs the prime minister that "his personal conditions do not enable him to accept the distinctive invitation at present but he will keep considering the possibility of taking another standpoint in the future"²⁷.

The relevant entries in the *Tagebuch* run as follows:

"[August 25] At the same period many letters arrived from Egypt exhorting me to give a course of lectures on philosophy (again for mammon in profusion!!) in the new university in Cairo in the coming winter. Prince Ahmed Fuad is at the head of this foundation as Président-Recteur. His secretary was given the task to do "everything imaginable, even unimaginable" to induce me to take a positive decision. Finally a letter from the Prince himself dated the 16th inst. arrived from Paris, which should be consulted in the original. Before leaving for this place²⁸ I wrote my refusal. Why? Why? One should conjure up in one's mind the scars I still bear on my body from my slavery during the years 1875-1905 in order to understand why I feel incapable of undertaking anything unusual, that I can do nothing but daydream and perish in my daily work. And this daily work has been crowned with magnificent recognition. [...]"

"[October 13] The arrival of the Egyptian Prince Ahmed Fuad and his visit to our university was announced for today. The Rector told me to be present at the reception. Even during the presentation and while we accompanied him to the library, the Prince and his companions, Dr. Forti, librarian at Cairo University and Consul Bondy Bey, were already intimating to me that the Prince's excursion to Budapest was meant for me alone. During breakfast at his hotel, to which the Prince had invited me, the offensive aimed at getting me to accept the above-mentioned invitation began. "Je suis venu seulement pour vous convaincre." I am assumed to be "le plus grand arabisant du monde" and to have an obligation to bring Occidental culture and scholarship to the Orient. In Vienna he asked the minister Count Aehrenthal and even the King²⁹ to exert pressure upon me to this end. I would be "worshipped" in Egypt and the greatest respect would be shown to me. So it went on for three hours. The three gentlemen also tried to suggest patriotic motives to me. During the whole journey all over Europe all the experts had referred to me as the most qualified authority. I was entreated to yield to the "suffrage universel". At the same time

²⁶ Goldziher-Nöldeke, *Correspondence* 352-353. Cf. Nöldeke's answer of 11. November. *Ibid.*, 355-356.

²⁷ Goldziher-Khuen-Héderváry, *Correspondence*. Letter from Khuen-Héderváry dated 16.10.1911 (personal pronouns altered by me – I. O.). The draft of Goldziher's draft is undated. [Both letter and draft are in Hungarian.]

²⁸ Puszta Tövisgyháza.

²⁹ Emperor Franz Joseph (of Austria) was also the King of Hungary and it is his latter title which is always used in Hungary.

the advancement of a lot of university professors to the next rank up was published in the official gazette today. People of very inferior quality enjoyed this recognition and promotion. My name is not to be found in the list. This year I conclude the fortieth year of my activities in the university, 34 years as an unsalaried *Privatdozent*. And I am supposed to go to Egypt to seek laurels!"

"[October 17] Today I received a letter from our Prime Minister, Count Khuen Héderváry, in which His Excellency gives me to understand, at the request of Prince Fuad recently submitted to him, how much my acceptance of the invitation to Egypt would be in the interest of the reputation of Hungarian scholarship. The letter and my answer can be found among the papers concerning this affair."

"[October 28] Secretary of State Balogh³⁰, with whom I have had to confer on professional matters this evening, informs me that a letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Aehrenthal, addressed to our Minister of Education, is lying on his desk awaiting attention. Aehrenthal is asking the latter to induce me to accept the invitation to Egypt in the interests of the Monarchy. Now all at once one discovers that there are so many interests tied up with my person. Interests which Egyptian Princes had to point out to them."

[25. August.] [...] Während derselben Zeit gingen viele Briefe aus Aegypten ein, um mich zu bewegen, den kommenden Winter (wieder für reichlichen Mammon!) an der neuen Universität in Kairo einen Kurs über Philosophie zu geben. An der Spitze dieser Gründung steht als Präsident-Recteur der Prinz Achmed Fuad. Sein Sekretär hatte den Auftrag, "alles mögliche, ja auch unmögliche" zu unternehmen, um mich zu einem bejahenden Entschluss zu bewegen. Zum Schluss kam noch ein aus Paris vom 16. d. M. datierter Brief des Prinzen selbst, den man im Original lesen möge. Vor meiner Abreise hierher schrieb ich meine abschlägige Antwort. Warum? Warum? Man vergegenwärtige sich die Striemen, die ich von meiner Sklaverei 1875-1905 noch immer am Körper trage, um zu verstehen, dass ich mich zu allem Ungewöhnlichen unfähig fühle, dass ich nun nichts anderes mag, als in meiner täglichen Arbeit verdämmern, verschwinden. Und diese tägliche Arbeit ist von herrlicher Anerkennung gekrönt. [...] [13. Oktober.] Für heute war die Ankunft des aegyptischen Prinzen Achmed Fuad und sein Besuch an unserer Universität angekündigt. Der Rektor beschied mich zum Empfang. Schon während der Vorstellung und der Begleitung zur Bibliothek deutete mir der Prinz sowie sein Begleiter Dr. Forti, Bibliothekar der Kairoer Universität und Konsul Bondy Bey, an, dass der Ausflug des Prinzen nach Budapest nur mir gegolten habe. Während des Dejeuners, zu dem mich Fuad Pascha in sein Hotel einlud, gieng nun die Bearbeitung zur Annahme der auf voriger Seite erwähnten Einladung los. "Je suis venu seulement pour vous convaincre." Ich sei "le plus grand arabisant du monde" und hätte die Pflicht, occidentalische Kultur und Wissenschaft nach dem Orient zu bringen. In Wien habe er den Minister Graf Aehrenthal und selbst den König gebeten, auf mich Pressure in diesem Sinne zu üben. Ich würde in Aegypten auf den Händen getragen und die grösste Satisfaktion mir zuteil werden. So gieng es drei Stunden. Auch patriotische Motive wurden mir von den drei Herren nabezulegen versucht. Auf der ganzen Reise durch Europa haben ferner alle Kompetenten auf mich als den Berufensten verwiesen. Ich müsse mich vor dem suffrage universel beugen. Zur selben Zeit war im Amtsblatt von heute das Avancement einer Menge von Universitätsprofessoren in die nächsthöhere Rangelasse zu lesen. Leute von sehr inferioren Qualitäten erlebten diese Anerkennung und Beförderung. Mein Name ist in dieser Liste nicht zu finden. Ich beschliesse in diesem Jahre das 40. Jahr meiner

³⁰ Jenő Balogh (1864-1953), lawyer and politician. Professor at Budapest University (1900-1910), state secretary in the Ministry of Religion and Public Education (1910-1913), minister of justice (1913-1917).

Wirksamkeit an der Universität, 34 Jahre als unbesoldeter Privatdozent. Ich solle nach Aegypten geben, um mir Lorbeeren zu holen! [17. Oktober.] Heute erhielt ich ein Schreiben unseres Ministerpräsidenten Grafen Khuen Héderváry, in dem mir Se. Exc. mit Anknüpfung an ein an ihn ergangenes Ansuchen des Prinzen Fuad nahe legt, wie sehr es im Interesse der Reputation der ungarischen Wissenschaftlichkeit läge, dem Rufe nach Aegypten Folge zu leisten. Brief und meine Antwort liegen unter den auf diese Angelegenheit bezüglichen Papieren. [28. Oktober.] Staatssekretär Balogh, mit dem ich heute abends in Fachangelegenheiten konferieren musste, teilt mir mit, dass ein Schreiben des Ministers des Auswärtigen, Graf Aehrenthal, an unseren Unterrichtsminister ihm zur Erledigung vorliege. Aehrenthal bittet den letzteren mich zu bestimmen, im Interesse der Monarchie den Ruf nach Aegypten anzunehmen. So plötzlich findet man also so grosse Interessen an meine Person geknüpft. Das musste ihnen durch aegyptische Prinzen entdeckt werden. [31. Dezember. Nachts.] [...] Noch einige Notizen zu 1912. Im Juli kam wieder ein langer Brief vom Prinzen Fuad mit Wiederholung der Einladung nach Kairo. [...] (Goldziher, Tagebuch 269-271, 274).

While these statements shed light on the personality of a great Arabist elucidating the highly personal motives behind his decision to turn down the invitation to the Egyptian University, at the same time they also offer an insight into the early days of the newly founded institution, along with glimpses into the broader implications of an undertaking which had relevance in international politics, too.

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