

## ON THE OCCASION OF PROFESSOR K. CZEGLÉDY'S EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY

On 21 December 1994 Hungarian Orientalists are celebrating the eightieth birthday of Professor Károly Czeglédy, the "Sheik" and Master of all Hungarians who have dealt with Arabic studies in Hungary or abroad in recent decades. He gave courses in Semitic philology and Arabic studies beginning from 1942, became head of Department of Semitic Philology and Arabic Studies in 1963 and held this position until his retirement in 1984. His main interest has been focused on Arabic historical and geographical sources of early Hungarian history. In the course of these researches, however, he necessarily has also come across pure Islamic problems. Summing up Professor Czeglédy's achievements in the field of Islamic studies, the following deserve especially to be mentioned:

One of the main problems concerning *Sūra XVIII (al-Kahf)* is related to the Alexander-legend. Namely, the question arises, which version of the legend was transmitted to Muḥammad? It is evident that the Prophet became acquainted with the eschatological version of the legend enlarged with the story of Gōg and Māgōg. Examining the relationship between these two components, Professor Czeglédy reached the conclusion that their combination must have taken place in Syrian territory after 515 AD. The sources reveal that it was the first combined version of the *Alexanderroman* and the eschatological legend formed after 515 AD which found its way to Muḥammad.

Parallels to the eschatological expectations centring upon Gōg and Māgōg and the Northern nomads can also be discovered among the Persians. Middle Persian apocalyptic literature mentions the attacks of Turanian nomads. These eschatological expectations especially influenced Šī'ite Islam. The Middle Persian eschatological texts make reference to the name of a glorious messianic figure, Vahrām ī Varjāvand, in connection with these expectations. Research has shown that the name Vahrām can be identified with the name of Bahrām Čōbin, the Persian warlord, the would-be usurper who saved Persia from the attack of the Turks in the East. Through his miraculous victory he takes on

a similarity to those great Iranian heroes who liberated Iran in the eternal war against the Turkic enemy in earlier historical and legendary times. In addition to this, Bahrām himself became a real Messiah in the eyes of his contemporaries, who expected him to return when he fled to the Turks after his unsuccessful attempt to usurp the throne. Bahrām, however, never came back from the Brass Castle, the capital city of the Turks. On the other hand, the figure of the Messiah returning from the Brass Castle appears in the preaching of Sindbād, who claimed that Abū Muslim, killed after the victory of the ʿAbbāsīd movement, did not die but would return from the Brass Castle where he lived with the Mahdī. This motif discloses that Sindbād attributed the originally Persian Messianic tradition connected with Bahrām to the figure of Abū Muslim. This development also indicates that the origin of Šīʿite Messianic ideas can be looked for in Persia. Thus, Professor Czeglédy has shown that Persian apocalyptic literature was considerably influenced by the history of Bahrām and in this connection we owe him important insights into the true nature of the expectations of the Mahdī in late Sāsānid times and among the Šīʿites; he has also collected and interpreted the various traditions concerning the legendary Brass Castle.

Professor Czeglédy also dealt with the history of Muslims in medieval Hungary. He was especially interested in the problems relating to their origins and to the different names occurring in the sources. Research must differentiate between their two groups. The first one referred to in the sources as *Izmaelites*, *Kāliz* or *Saracens* arrived in Hungary between 896 and the beginning of the 11th century. Although they played an important role in the economic life of Hungary, they had to conceal their Islamic religion, so they pretended to be Christians. The members of the second group, whom the famous traveller Abū Hāmid al-Ġarnāṭī also mentions, were mercenaries from the Maġrib who lived in Hungary and played an important role in the period between the second half of the 11th century and the Tartar invasion in 1241-42.