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Dear Readers,
Dear Fellow Scholars,

Since its inception, the Journal of Central and Eastern European African Studies (JCEEAS) has offered readers a wide range of perspectives in its thematic issues, covering a broad spectrum of disciplines and topics. Following previous examples, the present special issue includes high quality contributions from Hungarian and international academics, whose papers use a variety of approaches from different fields of scholarship to focus attention on the central theme of this issue. Most of the volume contains full-length papers, while the book reviews provide an insight into books that may be of interest to our readers.

In this issue, we aim to delve into the diverse aspects of Egypt, that have been little or not at all known until now. Known for its rich history, awe-inspiring monuments, and vibrant culture, Egypt continues to captivate the imaginations of people around the world. In this context, we can gain insight not only into the state's domestic and foreign policy developments, but also into Hungarian relations with the country through personal life stories.

The author of the opening essay, István Dávid Vácz, provides an excellent historiographical overview of the academic writings on Egypt in interwar Hungary. Applying the principle of chronological order, the reader is then introduced to a short biography of László Almásy, written by Alexandra Batoni, in which the Hungarian explorer's activities in Africa in the period before and during the Second World War are given great emphasis. In the following article, Máté Percze gives an in-depth insight into the conflict that President Gamal Abdel-Nasser himself called the Arab Vietnam, the Yemeni civil war of the 1960s and the tendencies and consequences of Egyptian intervention in it. Ágoston Tüzes presents a little-known but even more fascinating period in Hungarian sporting history through the Egyptian coaching activities of Nándor Hidegkuti. In the next two papers, Lukács Krajcsir and Mustafa Burak Sener separately provide perfect descriptions of a specific yet defining aspect of the power relations in the Middle East, the changing Turkish-Egyptian relationship in different periods and under different circumstances. Zoltán Prantner and Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar then focus on a little known, but undoubtedly fundamental dimension of Egyptian domestic politics, analysing the violent manifestations of extremist religious and political trends since 2010. Moving to the everyday, Elisabeth Bishop writes separately on Egypt's geopolitical alignment through the digital humanities, and finally Anna Zsófia Marlok discusses the professional work of István Zimonyi, one of the most prominent scholars in Hungarian academia, with a special focus on his work on the Arab World in the context of Egyptian-Hungarian cultural relations.

In the light of the above, we encourage our readers to join us as we embark on a voyage to explore the diverse, novel approach and the wealth of new information presented in this issue. The editors wish all those interested a pleasant reading experience in this issue!

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Egypt in the Hungarian Scientific Journals between the Two World Wars[1]

István Dávid Vácz[2]

Abstract:

The period between the two world wars was a crucial one for both Hungarian and Egyptian history. While Hungary was trying to rebuild itself from the shock of the Trianon peace treaty that ended the First World War, the 'land of the pyramids' was fighting for its independence from the British. Although the two states had very different histories and were separated by a considerable geographical distance, their relations developed in many ways between the two world wars. This research aims to make a modest contribution to the discourse on Hungarian-Egyptian bilateral relations through the selected Hungarian academic journals. The article implements the knowledge-geography approach, aiming to show who, what and why they wrote about Egypt, thus revealing what they knew, what interested them, what problems and issues they touched upon, and what opinions they expressed about them. The present paper is the first phase of a basic study, which raises several questions and issues that require further examination.

Keywords:
Colonialism, Egypt, history of science, Horthy-era, Hungarian scientific journals, Suez

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1. Introduction

The period between the two world wars was a crucial one for both Hungarian and Egyptian history. While Hungary was trying to rebuild itself from the shock of the Trianon peace treaty that ended the First World War, the 'land of the pyramids' was fighting for its independence from the British.

Although the two states had very different historical paths and were separated by a considerable geographical distance, their relations developed in many respects during this period, and they showed a degree of affinity and sympathy for each other on a number of issues. Although Egypt remains large and important today, research into its relations with Hungary is in many ways an unexplored area. Among the researchers on the subject, we should mention Krisztián Komár (Komár, 2012; 2003) and Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar, whose work in this field is unavoidable.

This research aims to make a modest contribution to the discourse on bilateral relations through selected Hungarian academic journals. The study adopted the knowledge-geography approach, aiming to show who, what and why they wrote about Egypt, thus revealing what they knew, what interested them, what problems and issues they discussed and what opinions they expressed. The analysis aims to find focal points, rather than presenting all the information and news about Egypt. To answer these questions, the study intends to interpret them in the context of the relations and aspirations of the two states. The present paper is the first chapter of a basic research that raises a variety of questions and issues that require further exploration.

During the Horthy era, a considerable number of academic writings on Egypt appeared, both in books (Haltenberger, 1937, p. 196) and in social science journals. From these, the study selected, on the one hand, those that were an integral part of the Hungarian academic life and dealt with the country of the Pharaohs in terms of their topics. These included Földrajzi Közlemények [The Geographical Bulletins], Társadalomtudomány [Social Science], Közgazdasági Értesítő [The Economic Bulletin], Külügyi Szemle [Foreign Affairs Review] and Korunk [Our Age]. The second group includes those journals which, although not strictly scientific, were high-quality, influential journals of the period, and because of their subject matter, were important platforms for the dissemination of knowledge about the East: Turán [Turan], Földgömb [The Globe], Magyar Szemle [The Hungarian Review], Budapesti Szemle [The Budapest Review], Búvár [Diver] and Napkelet [Sunrise].[3]

2. Egyptian-Hungarian Relations between the Two World Wars

Institutional relations between the states were established during the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, primarily for political and economic reasons (J. Nagy,

[3] The names of the journals are translated by the author. The study uses the Hungarian names of the journals, except some cases.

2015, pp. 15–16). In the 19th century, the region attracted the curiosity of Hungarian Orientalists and researchers of international relations, as the opening of the Suez Canal increased the geopolitical significance of the region, and modern ideas brought from the West led to important transformations in the Islamic world in various spheres of society, politics, and economy. Ignác Goldziher, one of the most prominent Hungarian orientalists, wrote about these developments as early as the 1880s (J. Nagy, 2015, p. 16). However, the further deepening of relations between Egypt and Hungary was interrupted by the First World War and the new international order.

In the 1920s, both countries faced new challenges. After the Trianon Peace Treaty, Hungary's main goal became territorial revision and the reorganization and strengthening of the economic life of the shattered country (Abdallah, 2014, p. 76). Therefore, it structured its foreign relations in this context, mainly in the hope of gaining the support of a great power, which was essential to assert its territorial claims. These foreign policy priorities were not abandoned even after the country's successful integration into the new international system (Romsics, 2010, p. 235).

Egypt also faced enormous difficulties during the same historical period, which Botman called the "liberal era" (Botman, 1998, p. 285). Thus, although the British recognized the independence of the Arab country in 1922, they restricted it in many respects for key geopolitical interests (e.g. the communication and trade infrastructure or the Suez Canal). British troops could continue to be stationed in the territory of the theoretically sovereign country, its specific economic interests could not be harmed, and the British administration could remain in Sudan (Botman, 1998, p. 285). At the same time, the representatives of the nationalist Wafd[4] party became dominant in terms of their programme and their proportion within the new political elite, with the main objective of overthrowing foreign domination (Abdallah, 2015, pp. 60–61; Botman, 1998, p. 287). Consequently, Egypt, like Hungary, was less concerned with other international issues (Abdallah, 2014, p. 73; Botman, 1998, p. 294). The Egyptians saw the 1936 treaty as a great success and a further step towards true independence, while the 1937 Montreux Convention was another milestone in Egypt's history, as it put an end to capitulations and gave Egypt greater room for maneuver in foreign policy (Botman, 1998, pp. 294–295).

The relationship between the two countries must be understood in the above-mentioned context and had to be completely reshaped in the 1920s. The latter milestone was the appointment of an honorary Hungarian Consul General to Egypt in 1924, followed by the opening of the Hungarian embassy in 1928, which was managed from Bern until 1939, mainly for financial reasons (Abdallah, 2015, pp. 65–66; Komár, 2003, p. 75). In addition, during the decades under review, a number of delegations from both sides participated in high-level visits and several economic associations were

[4] Egypt's most popular party in the first half of the twentieth century, whose aim was to achieve independence.

established to develop trade (Abdallah, 2015, pp. 70–76). Nagy, 2015, p. 17). Although the relationship between the two countries was primarily characterized by the exploitation of economic potential, in which cotton played the main role from Egypt and technical technology from Hungary, the two administrations also moved closer politically. In this spirit, they expressed their mutual sympathy on diplomatic issues of particular importance to the other side. While King Fuad I supported the Hungarian revisionist aspirations, the Hungarian political elite followed the Egyptian independence aspirations with great interest (J. Nagy, 2015, p. 17; Komár, 2002; Abdallah, 2015, p. 75). The milestone of economic rapprochement was the trade treaty signed in 1928, which implemented the principle of most favorable tariffs (Abdallah, 2015, p. 76). In the 1930s, cooperation also extended to scientific-cultural relations, when Hungarian engineering and scientific groups traveled to Egypt (the latter's achievements included the organization of the Egyptian Agricultural Museum) (Abdallah, 2015, pp. 94–95, p. 101). Besides, Hungary also became a popular tourist destination for the Egyptian elite (Komár, 2002, p. 47). In summary, the relationship between the two world wars deepened slowly and encouragingly, but the positive trend was interrupted again after the outbreak of the World War II (Komár, 2002, p. 47).

3. The Selected Journals and Their Authors

The purpose of this chapter aims to briefly introduce the selected journals and their authors. This is necessary in order to show the most influential scholars and intellectuals who played an active role in knowledge transfer.[5] Authors are listed by name if they published at least one paper on Egypt or if it is important to mention them because of the information they provided. The journals are grouped by subject.

The first category includes the 'Földrajzi Közlemények' [The Geographical Bulletin] and the 'Földgömb' [The Globe], which were published by the Hungarian Geographical Society. The interest of Hungarian geography in Egypt was well illustrated by the articles of Jenő Cholnoky, one of the most influential geographers of the period, who wrote mainly about hydrology and its relations to the society (Szabó, 2010, p. 476).[6] Another important geographer of the time, Pál Teleki's protégé, László Kádár, a member of Eötvös József Collegium, also wrote numerous articles, mainly about his travels (Győri, 2014, p. 23).[7] Other members of this circle also included the geographer Aurél Hézser, secretary and permanent associate of the Hungarian Geographical Society (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon [Hungarian Biographical Lexicon], n. d.[8]), the geographer and Catholic priest Gusztáv Kalmár (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.), Elemér Pólay, a jurist

[5] The individuals listed here are those whom the research was able to identify.
[6] See, for instance, the short article "*A brit-szudáni öntözések*" [*Irrigations in the British-Sudan*] (Cholnoky, 1924, pp. 114-116).
[7] See Kádár, 1935a, pp. 58-65.
[8] The names of the lexicons and encyclopedias are translated by the author of this article. Their Hungarian names are used hereafter.

(Jakab, 2020, pp. 569–570), and Győző Temesy, a secondary school principal (Magyar Katolikus Lexikon [Hungarian Catholic Lexicon], n. d.). A translation of the study "Afrika és a fehér faj telepedése" [Africa and the Settlement of the White Race] by the renowned Italian geographer, geologist, and traveler of the time, Giotto Dainelli Dolfi[9] (Pampana, 2014, p. 106), was also published during the Second World War (Dainelli, 1942, pp. 150–161). Among the authors were Egyptologists such as Tihamér Kuhárszky,[10] and the leading figure of Hungarian Egyptology of this period, Vilmos Wessetzky (Nemzeti Örökség Intézete [Institute of National Heritage], n. d.). These scholars mainly worked on ancient and historical geography. The journals also published articles by renowned orientalists such as Gyula Germanus and József Somogyi (Mestyan, 2014, p. 5; Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum [Petőfi Museum of Literature], n. d.).[11] Among influential contemporaries, László Almásy, "Abu Ramla", the "father of sand", also published articles on his travels (Múlt-kor, 2021).[12]

The second "social and political science" group includes 'Külügyi Szemle' [Foreign Affairs Review], 'Turán' [Turan], 'Korunk' [Our Age], 'Társadalomtudomány' [Social Science] and 'Közgazdasági Értesítő' [Economic Bulletin]. The first journal was published by the Foreign Affairs Society, in which the authors of articles on Egypt were often either not identified or, if they were, little information was available. Sándor Kürthy was one of the latter, who published an article entitled "A független Egyiptom és az angol-olasz viszály" [The Independent Egypt and the Anglo-Italian Feud] (Kürthy, 1936, pp. 9–22). The character of Lajos Kokas, who analyzed the issues surrounding the Suez Canal from a legal aspect, also needs to be explored (Kokas, 1936, pp. 277–284). More detailed information is currently only available on the legal and political writer Olivér Eöttevényi (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.).

Gyula Neubauer (also Gyula Abay Neubauer), economist and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Hungarian Biographical Lexicon), and László Ottlik, conservative politician, also published in the journal of 'Társadalomtudomány' [Social Science] (Szabadfalvi, 2019). These writings were mainly about the British Empire, not Egypt. 'Korunk' [Our Age], the journal of the Hungarian intellectuals in Transylvania had a similar profile (Korunk). Imre Gyomai, poet, writer, and journalist, whose wife was an Egyptian of Armenian descent, wrote in a relevant and unique way (Cserba, 2022). The famous journal of the Turanian Society, 'Turán', also published articles by Cholnoky and Alajos Paikert. The latter was an economist, organizer of the Hungarian Agricultural Museum and latter a state secretary (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.). His character is particularly important for bilateral relations, as he was asked to organize the

[9] Dainelli played an active role in the exploration of Africa and Italian colonial efforts (Pampana, 2014, pp. 108-111).
[10] His famous book collection is still illegally owned by Russia (Admin, 1998).
[11] József Somogyi, orientalist and professor of Islamic studies, published the works of Ignác Goldziher. He worked in the USA after 1956 (Petőfi Irodalmi Múzeum).
[12] See for example „*A Libiai sivatag felderítésének története*" [*The History of the Exploration of the Libyan Desert*] (Almásy, 1937, pp. 1-15).

Agricultural Museum in Cairo (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.). 'Közgazdasági Értesítő' [The Economic Bulletin] was an indispensable journal which recorded all the details of the trade between the two countries and regularly published analyses of Egypt's economy. The most significant articles were written by Kálmán Petheő, a ministerial adviser, and he was probably responsible for large numbers of articles published on Egypt that did not mention the author (Petheő, 1936, p. 24). His career could be the subject of further research, as his work in the Bulletin suggests that he played a key role in building economic relations.

The last category includes interdisciplinary journals. The first of these was the conservative 'Magyar Szemle' [Hungarian Review], a cultural, ideological, and political journal. István Bethlen, a leading politician of the Horthy era, played a major role in its creation, while the renowned intellectual historian Gyula Szekfű was its founding editor (Arcanum a., n. d.). In the "Foreign Policy Review" column of the journal, diplomat György Ottlik, who also had a successful career as a journalist, wrote extensively on international political affairs related to Egypt (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.). The historian Lajos Gogolák, a student of Gyula Szekfű, also wrote in this column. 'Budapesti Szemle' [Budapest Review] was a similarly influential journal on a wide range of topics (Arcanum, b., n. d.). Its writers also came from a broad spectrum. On the subject of ancient Egypt, the paper featured writings by the historian, archaeologist and Egyptologist Ede Mahler (Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon, n. d.), and Ferenc Calice, the Austrian Ambassador to Budapest (Magyar Távirati Iroda Hírarchívum, 1920-1945). Furthermore, an important commentary, mainly related to the geopolitical imagination, appeared in the essay about Apponyi by Gyula Kornis, philosopher and cultural politician (Kornis, 1935, pp. 136–152). Gyula Germanus also contributed to the journal.

In 1935, the magazine 'Búvár' [Diver] was founded, mainly for natural sciences (Búvár, 1935, p. 1). However, contrary to its introduction, it also published a very large number of important socio-economic-political essays, in which Egypt often appeared. The topics included both ancient and modern themes. For example, the Egyptologist and art historian Aladár Dobrovits published his essay „Természettudomány az ókori Egyiptomban" [Natural History in the Ancient Egypt] (Dobrovits, 1938, pp. 849–854), as well as the aforementioned geographer László Kádár's study „Afrika Gyarmatosításának a Története" [The History of the Colonization of Africa] (Kádár, 1935b, pp. 678–685). Imre Szieberth, government adviser and technical writer, wrote about the successes of Hungarian engineering in the magazine (Búvár, 1935b). An important article on Hungarian-Egyptian relations and nationalism in the land of the Pharaohs was written by Róbert Kertész, a writer and journalist (Kertész, 1937, pp. 929–932). Quite interestingly, Kálmán Rátz, a far-right politician, military officer, and public writer (Paksa, 2011, pp. 107–108, 117, 119, 154), also appeared in the journal with several studies, including one dealing with the role and importance of the cotton industry in the world economy (Rátz, 1935, pp. 149–154). Finally, the journal 'Napkelet' [Sunrise]

deserves a mention for an article by Loránt Harmatzy-Simon entitled „Tut-Ench-Amon és kora" [Tut-Ench-Amon and his Era] (Harmatzy-Simon, 1923, pp. 437–450).

4. Travels in Egypt

Travels played an important role in the Hungarian scientific and non-scientific life. This certainly has something to do with the fact that Hungary was not a colonizer throughout its history, and individual "exotic" travel was considered exceptional. Several periodicals published articles in this field, notably the 'Földrajzi Közlemények' and the 'Földgömb'. Some of the reports referred to Egypt as a stage in the life of a prominent individual, commemorating his or her career. These included Jenő Bánó, former Egyptian diplomat, Béla Erődi, linguist and geographer, and János Jankó, ethnographer (Thirring, 1936, p. 74; Ormós, 1927, p. 246; Gunda, 1935, pp. 634–636).

Another group of journey reports was the travel report of an individual. Among these were shorter ones, such as Zoltán Sulkowsky's and Gyula Bartha's motorcycle journeys around the world, who also crossed Egypt (Sulkowsky, 1936, p. 374). It is also worth mentioning József Haranglábi Nemes' „Magyar hajón Budapestről Egyiptomba és vissza" [On a Hungarian Ship from Budapest to Egypt and Back], which presented the voyage in a very plastic way, illustrated with photographs (Nemes, 1939, pp. 298–308). The creation of the route had not only economic but also psychological significance in the post-Trianon Hungary, as the following extract illustrates: "It is not a sports yacht, my dear captain, - I replied -, it is a regular merchant ship, sailing every two months between Budapest and Egypt, carrying the Hungarian flag with glory" (Nemes, 1939, p. 298).[13] In Nemes' detailed description, the picture of Port Said stood out, where he noted that all nations were represented, now including the Hungarians (Nemes, 1939, p. 302). The reader can conclude from the report that this region of Egypt was the center of the world, and with its presence in the region, Hungary became equal to other states. Gyula Germanus, in his travelogue, reported with similar pride about the ship connection: "A few years ago, Hungarian entrepreneurship created a direct waterway between Budapest and Egypt" (Germanus, 1941, p. 127).

Most of the travelogues were about the voyages of the aforementioned László Almásy. Some of these articles were written by him.[14] It is also noteworthy that, the geographer László Kádár, assistant of the Economic Geography Institute, also mentioned above, accompanied him on part of his travels, and he wrote two articles about their activities.[15] Kádár also took part in Almásy's 1933 expedition, during which he carried out geological and botanical investigations and published the results in the yearbook of

[13] All of the quotes are translated by the author.
[14] See for example „*A Líbiai sivatag felderítésének története*" [*The History of the Exploration of the Libyan Desert*] (Almásy, 1937, pp. 1-15).
[15] See „*Gépkocsival a Líbiai sivatagban*" [*By Motorcar in the Libyan Desert*], „*Khargai emlékek*" [*Memories of Kharga*] (Kádár, 1935b, pp. 678-685; 1935c, pp. 212-221).

the Cairo Geographical Society and in the Geographical Journal (Temesy, 1934, p. 67). Kádár also wrote about their visit to the Khargai oasis in 1934 and gave a detailed account of the natural, social, and cultural conditions of the area, illustrated with photographs (Kádár, 1935a, pp. 58–65). In his writing, he made special mention of the hospitality of the locals and their time spent together with Bey Vashfi, which gave an insight into the life of an "Eastern lord" (Kádár, 1935a, pp. 63–65). Besides describing the geographical conditions, Almásy wrote about the history and contemporary significance of the desert explorations and the experiences of his own expedition (Almásy, 1937, pp. 1–15).

5. The Socio-Economic Geography of Egypt

The examined periodicals contained a wealth of information on the socio-economic geography of the country. However, they only focused on a few key areas, such as the Nile, the cotton, transport geography, and economic analysis.

5.1. The Nile and the Transformation of Nature

The first of these is Egypt's connection with the Nile. This is not surprising, since the country did indeed owe its existence to the river; Vogt called it "the Nile's Fabulous Empire" (Vogt, 1931, p. 74). The interest of Hungarian authors came from the fact that it was similar in Hungary, where the geography was shaped by the rivers too. As a consequence, hydrology was one of the central themes of the Hungarian geography, as exemplified by Cholnoky (Gyuris and Tóth, 2005, p. 46). Although he was originally a natural scientist, he wrote analyses not only of the natural world but also of civilizations, in which Egypt was regularly cited as an example. Cholnoky explained that „Egypt is really nothing but a long series of oases along the Nile" (Cholnoky, 1943, p. 224). The geographer saw the oases as one of the cradles of civilizations (Cholnoky, 1929, pp. 1–11). Szieberth also described the role of the river in shaping culture, and - like Wessetzky - linked it with religion (Szieberth, 1935a, pp. 74–76; Wessetzky, 1936, p. 356).

Another reason for the popularity of the topic - besides the economic reasons detailed later - the author of the study attributes to the modern man's mentality and the Hungarian civilizational consciousness. In the 19th century, the "great transformation of nature" took place in Hungary, which primarily meant river regulation. The works were seen by contemporaries as a kind of heroic achievement in which man conquered the nature, serving the interests of the state and the economy. This approach, as well as the similarities between the two countries, can be felt throughout the tone of the articles. Examples are the articles by Elemér Pólay „A régi Egyiptom öntöző kultúrája" [The Irrigation Culture of Ancient Egypt] and Vilmos Wessetzky „A víz kérdése az ókori Egyiptom életében" [The Question of Water in the Life of Ancient Egypt], in which the

water management of the ancient empire was analyzed in great detail and from many different perspectives (Pólay, 1936, pp. 218–223; Wessetzky, 1936, pp. 349–356). Although Pólay's study has theoretically nothing to do with Hungary, he linked the Hungarian transformation of nature to Egypt. As he concluded his study: „Canalization is, therefore, a very important issue in contemporary agricultural life. In our country, the regulation of the river Tisza and the draining of the marshes have already given a great deal of arable land for agricultural production, but there is still much to be done" (Pólay, 1936, p. 223). This was echoed by Wessetzky, who argued that the Hungarians could feel close to the agricultural Egypt (Wessetzky, 1936, p. 349). He also expressed the modernist spirit when he stated that: „If we look at the history of Egypt, we can see the geographical picture of the country evolving as a result of human labor" (Wessetzky, 1936, p. 356); and that „the human spirit and will could make use of it and lay the foundations of a gigantic empire, a wonderful culture" (Wessetzky, 1936, p. 350). The circle of modernists was further enriched by Horváth, who wrote: „Contrasted with the beautiful image of the Nile caught in the yoke of man, in Egypt all human activity takes place in the valley of the great river" (Horváth, 1932, p. 120). In addition, the influential Hungarian statesman Albert Apponyi had similar feelings in Egypt, according to Kornis: „But he immediately contrasts this with the beauty of the human will, which triumphed over the fierce power of nature, and the great ethical power of creation, which blesses millions of people when the irrigation works multiply the agricultural wealth of Egypt" (Kornis, 1935, p. 144).

5.2. Transport Geography

Besides the already mentioned Hungarian-Egyptian waterway, other transport issues were also raised. Not surprisingly, the Suez Canal was at the center of these. From the perspective of transport geography, an important article was Tihamér Kuhárszky's „A régi egyiptomiak Suzei csatornája" [The Suez Canal of the Ancient Egyptians], which also discussed modern times, and József Somogyi's article „A Suezi csatorna" [The Suez Canal], which described its history (Kuhárszky, 1935, pp. 172–180; Somogyi, 1938, pp. 300–309). The contemporary appreciation of the meaning of the canal was far more pronounced than it is today when its role in the creation of global connectivity was emphasized (Kuhárszky, 1935, p. 172; Somogyi, 1938, pp. 300–309). Suez also claimed the victory of the modernist conception alongside the Nile. According to Kuhárszky: "At Port-Said, the great statue of its builder is still hailed with silent admiration as a symbol of the triumph of unbreakable human will and knowledge" (Kuhárszky, 1935, p. 172). The question of air travel and railway connections was also raised, in which Somogyi saw great potential (Somogyi, 1927, pp. 123–124; Hézser, 1932a, p. 19; A Földgömb 1935a, 355–356).

5.3. The Economy

The 'Közgazdasági Értesítő' reported on the situation of the Egyptian economy on a quarterly and annual basis, which was mainly motivated by the purpose of promoting Hungarian export opportunities beyond the general reports. The articles were written on the one hand by the journal's staff, probably mainly by Kálmán Petheő.[16] The other source of information was the Royal Hungarian Consulate in Alexandria, which sent continuous information on the situation in the Arab country, generally under the title „Egyiptom gazdasági helyzete" [The Economic Situation of Egypt] (see Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1929a, pp. 11–12; 1929c, 9–10; 1928b, pp. 10–12; 1928c, pp. 14–15; 1927b, p. 15; 1927c, pp. 14–15; 1936, pp. 26–30; 1932a, pp. 15–16), or under a very similar title. These reports covered the whole economic spectrum, reporting on the performance of agriculture and industry, trade figures, planned infrastructure investments, and the development of Hungarian-Egyptian trade. Moreover, it is worth mentioning Suhay's „A független Egyiptom élete" [The Life of the Independent Egypt], which also tried to give a comprehensive picture of the conditions (Suhay, 1938, pp. 645–650). The journal also followed the development of Egypt's international trade and customs treaties with particular attention.[17] There were also some less comprehensive publications which analyzed specific economic sectors. It is interesting to note that, there were two articles about the furniture market, one in 1929 and the other in 1932 (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1929b, pp. 14–15; 1932b, pp. 9–10).

Overall, the economic development of Egypt was seen as positive by the Közgazdasági Értesítő and other authors before the Great Depression of 1929 (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1929a, pp. 11–12). Afterward, the consequences of the crisis were also reported in detail (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1930, p. 23). The 1930s were also viewed positively by the Hungarian experts. In their view, the state was steadily strengthened by the cotton, mining, and industrial developments, and was one of the few countries in the world where the budget had a surplus (Suhay, 1938, pp. 646–647; Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1936, pp. 26–30). Hungarian readers may also have been informed that the Egyptian economic structure was dualistic, where the large industry was in the hands of foreigners and small business was in the hands of the locals (A Földgömb, 1931, p. 350). In connection with the establishment of modern industries, Suhay also reported that a Hungarian engineer was hired to explore petroleum (Suhay, 1938, p. 647).

The question of Egyptian cotton was one of the key themes in the economic geography essays. This was partly because, although the state was trying to industrialize, cotton remained its main product (Beinin, 1998, p. 318). According to Suhay, it was so essential - slightly overstated - that the country owed its existence to it (Suhay, 1938, p. 646). In order to increase its production, the Egyptians built numerous dams and

[16] See for example „*Kiviteli lehetőségek a Levante országaiba*" [*Export Opportunities to the Countries of the Levant*] (Petheő, 1935a, pp 13-20; 1935b, pp 16-21).
[17] See Közgazdasági értesítő, 1927b, p. 15; 1928c, p. 15; 1928b, pp. 10-12.

reservoirs during this period (Harkay, 1941, p. 174). Besides, unsuccessful experiments with the raw material were also carried out in Hungary between the two world wars (Hajdú, 2000, p. 245). Kálmán Rátz dealt with the topic as he was convinced that it was one of the most significant raw materials in the world, from which almost 80% of textile products originated (Rátz, 1935, p. 149). Rátz also analyzed the use of the crop from the military point of view, highlighting its crucial role in the production of uniforms and weapons (Rátz, 1935, p. 149). In his article, he explained that, because of its strategic value, one of the main objectives of the British was to create their own production capacity, in which Egypt played a major role (Rátz, 1935, pp. 149–150). Petheő also considered it appropriate to monitor the situation, albeit because of the emerging textile industry of Hungary (Petheő, 1935b, p. 16).

In addition to the central issues, there was also a presentation on oasis management by László Kádár (Kádár, 1935a, pp. 58–60) and consultancy for increasing exports, which emphasized Egypt's excellence and the baselessness of European complaints and considered the assistance of a good agent essential for the successful commercial activity (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1928b, pp. 10–12). A very modern work on the conflict between economic interests and cultural heritage was also published in 'A Földgömb' in 1929. The article discussed the situation of the island of Philae, "the pearl of Egypt", an island of great cultural value for its ancient monuments, which was threatened by the raising level of water caused by the Assuan dam (A Földgömb, 1929, pp. 36–37).

6. The History of Egypt and the Games of the Great Powers

Although the history of the land of the pharaohs was one of the most popular topics of the period, there was also a tendency for authors to concentrate on a few areas. Dainelli emphasized the uniqueness of the civilization: „Of the great cultures of the past, only one was born on the African continents, and that was the Egyptian" (Dainelli, 1942, p. 150). He and Somogyi also pointed out that the ancient civilization was inherited by the Hellenes and the Arabs (Dainelli, 1942, p. 152; Somogyi, 1943, p. 26). The Italian scholar also found Egypt unique in the sense that because of its historical background, it was able to absorb the Western culture, and it was the only place in Africa where the national feeling emerged (Dainelli, 1942, p. 152). Somogyi also referred to the European connection and a common origin when he stated that the „most ancient civilization of the white man" was Egypt and Mesopotamia (Somogyi, 1941, p. 33). Harkay, who argued that, unlike the rest of the continent, Egypt had long been a player in the historical process, also took a Europe-centred approach (Harkay, 1941, p. 171). There were, of course, opposing views on this. For example, Kornis described the Egyptian monuments and ruins as alien, in contrast to their early Christian, Greek, and Latin counterparts, where he felt the connection from the common past (Kornis, 1935, p. 143). Ambassador Calice, on the other hand, approached the issue from the perspective

of the organic state theories that were widespread at that time. In his opinion, he explained that the study of the civilization was an exceptional opportunity, since it was possible to see its entire life cycle, implicitly suggesting that, in his opinion, the 'real Egypt' was already dead (Calice, 1933, p. 152).

Among the issues published in journals, those dealing with the ancient period were popular. Among them, Calice wrote about the times before the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, including linguistic and archaeological aspects (Calice, 1933, pp. 152–169). Tihamér Kuhárszky, in his article „A legrégibb tengeri expedíciók" [The Oldest Maritime Expeditions], illustrated the greatness and the main historical events of ancient Egypt (Kuhárszky, 1932, pp. 75–88). Ede Mahler, an Egyptologist, and Harmatzy-Simon presented archaeological relics. The former also provided translated inscriptions, while the latter described the significance of the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb and the historical context of the reign of the pharaoh (Mahler, 1924, pp. 45–60; Harmatzy-Simon, 1923, pp. 437–450). This area also includes a paper by Kuhárszky on the significance and history of the ancient Suez Canal (Kuhárszky, 1935, pp. 172–180). It is interesting that there was only one article on Hellenized Egypt, Gusztáv Kalmár's „Az ókori görög városok történetföldrajza" [The Historical Geography of Ancient Greek Cities] (Kalmár, 1926, pp. 202–218).

However, after the achievements and significance of the ancient civilization, there was a gap of several thousand years in the historical periods covered by the publications, as the interest of Hungarian scholars returned to Egyptian history mainly in connection with the events and processes of the 19th century. Only Kürthy's study went back to the 16th century in outline, but he did this to explain the background of the problems of his present (Kürthy, 1936, pp. 11–12). In the modern era, Hungarian researchers were most interested in the history of colonialism, but it also had a strong present focus. The subject of Egypt usually came up in the context of the colonization of Africa, mainly because of its links with the English and the French. Among these, it is worth mentioning Lajos Kokas's „A Francia diplomácia útjai" [The Ways of the French Diplomacy], László Kádár's „Afrika Gyarmatosításának a Története" [The History of the Colonization of Africa], and the studies published in the 'A Földgömb' entitled „A szaharai gyarmatok határainak kialakulása" [The Formation of the Borders of the Saharan Colonies] (Kokas, 1935, pp. 335–351; Kádár, 1935b, pp. 678–685; The Globe, 1935b, pp. 117–120). Overall, these were mainly descriptive, with little private reflection. Among the few documented opinions, Kádár's should be mentioned, who saw the colonization of Egypt by the French as positive and liberal, who did not violate the laws of the local people, and who therefore benefited much more from the occupation than France (Kádár, 1935b, p. 681).[18] And in 'A Földgömb' it was stated that although the colonial borders were not perfect, they were still much fairer than the borders of Trianon (A Földgömb, 1935b, pp. 117–118).

[18] This reflects Kádár's personal opinion, which did not correspond to reality.

In addition, the most popular issue was the articles about the games of the great powers, which proved to be dominant not only in the 'Külügyi Szemle' but in most of the journals. According to Hungarian authors, geopolitical rivalries had to be dealt with for two reasons. On the one hand, as Geszti stated: „Three or four thousand years ago, all events were congested here, and there is no other place in the world where so much blood was shed as for the possession of the Mediterranean" (Geszti, 1940, p. 145). The latter was made clear in Eöttevényi's statement when he said: „Even that part of Hungarian public opinion which consciously looks beyond the borders of Trianon pays relatively little attention to events in foreign policy outside Europe, which, even if they have no direct effect on us, may nevertheless influence the future of the Carpathian Basin in its further development" (Eöttevényi, 1937, p. 146).

The studies focusing on the great power struggles centered on the Suez Canal, which, because of the British control and the Italian expansionist efforts to gain control over it, was mainly examined in the British-Italian context. Among the works dealing with the subject, one should highlight the works of the Foreign Affairs Review „Egyiptom viszonya Angliához" [Egypt's Relations with Britain], György Ottlik „Külpolitika Szemle" [Foreign Policy Review], Imre Lakatos „Világpolitikai problémák. Küzdelem a Földközi-tengerért" [World Policy Problems; Struggle for the Mediterranean], the author of „Az Egyiptomi kérdés" [The Egyptian Question], writing under the pseudonym Omikron, and Péter Domony „Nagy-Britannia és Egyiptom" [Great Britain and Egypt] (Külügyi Szemle, 1936, pp. 169–170; Ottlik, 1935, pp. 372–378; Omikron, 1930, pp. 187–188; Domony, 1929, pp. 79–85; Lakatos, 1926, pp. 651–657). In the Hungarian perception, it was also clear that Egypt was cardinal for the British because of the canal, the traffic through it, India, and the oil fields of the Middle East, and its status in the geopolitical imagination only strengthened with time (A Földgömb, 1930, p. 151; Kádár, 1935b, p. 684; Pethető, 1935c, pp. 17–19; Somogyi, 1938, p. 307; Gogolák, 1940, p. 417). According to Lakatos, for London, the maintenance of control over Egypt was a major issue, as the existence of the British Empire depended on it, and he cited the peace treaties around Paris, which he considered short-sighted, as the cause of the conflicts (Lakatos, 1926, p. 651). Ottlik considered that the British were also aware of this, which was the reason for the Briand-Kellogg pact, what the Brits called the Monroe Doctrine about Suez (Ottlik, 1928, p. 387). In addition to this, Kokas also approached the rivalry from a legal point of view in his paper „A Szuezi-csatorna a nemzetközi jogban" [The Suez Canal in the International Law] (Kokas, 1936, pp. 277–284).

Egypt was also an unavoidable part of the British geopolitical discourse. Their control over the African state was, according to contemporaries, based on two pillars - military occupation and the Nile floodgates in Sudan (Omikron, 1930, pp. 187–188; Ottlik, 1926, p. 414). Hungarian scholars expressed their opinions and claims about British imperialism and the Egyptian independence issues extensively, and they can be divided into two main groups. Some of them accepted the British narrative and adopted

the "classical geopoliticians" view of Britain's presence in Egypt as legitimate (Ottlik, 1926, p. 414). Domony went further in this respect when he wrote that the English occupation was in fact a consequence of the weakness of Egypt and the external power factors, which, in the absence of planned colonialism, was nothing more than a series of ad hoc actions (Domony, 1929, pp. 79–81). He acknowledged the presence of the British Empire as legitimate and even beneficial to the Egyptians since it allowed the modernization of the state during this period (Domony, 1929, p. 81). Ottlik also highlighted that the locals owed their self-government exclusively to the British (Ottlik, 1926, p. 414). Accordingly, Domony was hostile to the nationalist aspirations: „... the fighting soldiers of nationalism are not the Fellahin themselves, but those who have emerged from their ranks, and who, intoxicated by the slogan "Egypt for the Egyptians", and with the lack of judgment of their intellectual and social flock, saw themselves as capable of creating a better state than the British had done in decades of cultural work, and capable of achieving their goals by terrorist means" (Domony, 1929, p. 82).

However, the majority of commentators opposed this group and were negative about British policy and presence in Egypt. Kürthy argued that the 1882 riots were a good thing for the Brits because they were able to invade the country by using them as an excuse (Kürthy, 1936, p. 12). Regarding the Suez issue, Suhay did not accept the dominant narrative of the time, which was that the British needed to occupy the canal (Suhay, 1938, p. 646). He aptly noted that „a reason for conquering an empire can always be found if someone wants it" (Suhay, 1938, p. 646). Gyula Neubauer also opposed the British colonial policy, which he linked to Trianon and the hypocrisy of great power: „At the Congress held in Glasgow, not the mildest accusations were made by Egyptians and Hindus against the British rule, and it was evident that the right of self-determination of peoples is only agreeable to the English if it leads to the dismemberment of the Monarchy, but not if it threatens their world empire. Their colonial policy may be very liberal where English "legionaries" live, but in Egypt and India the traditional principle of 'divide et impera' is applied, and they are not better than the Habsburgs" (Neubauer, 1931, p. 169). The 'A Földgömb' sarcastically remarked about the British methods of negotiation, „For it is always good to have polite diplomatic negotiations accompanied by the menacing buzz of warplanes circling in the air" (A Földgömb, 1930, p. 151). The members of this group were accordingly sympathetic to Egyptian nationalism and national aspirations (Somogyi, 1943, pp. 27–28; Geszti, 1941, p. 98; Kertész, 1937, p. 932).

Very few publications have been written about the domestic politics of Egypt. The 'Külügyi Szemle' reported on the political crises but did not go into the deeper analysis (Külügyi Szemle, 1931, p. 362; 1934, p. 56). In this respect, Sándor Kürthy's „A független Egyiptom és az angol-olasz viszály" [The Independent Egypt and the Anglo-Italian Feud] was the only and thus unique study which detailed the events of domestic politics, as well as the parties, their political programs, their aims and instruments, the democratic institutions and their functioning (Kürthy, 1936, pp. 9–22). He underlined

that the Wafd was a non-extremist nationalist party, which only sought to gain independence for the country. But the state was on a kind of forced path, because of the threat of the Italian ambitions against it, which explained its pro-British policy (Kürthy, 1936, pp. 14–16). Kürthy also made several comparisons with the independence aspirations. According to him, the political spectrum was very similar to the situation in Hungary in 1867, with the Wafd party representing the party of '48 and the ruling party the party of '67 (Kürthy, 1936, p. 15). The author even drew parallels with the Young Turk movement and highlighted the difference between them, since the Egyptian modernists sought to implement their ideas by maintaining religious traditions (Kürthy, 1936, p. 18).

The Nile also played a major role in the games of the great powers, and the Hungarian intellectuals were also aware of this. The topic is particularly interesting because similar conflicts still exist around the river today. As Lakatos and Harkay argued, the dominance of those who controlled the upper reaches of the river underlined the significance of Sudan (Harkay, 1941, p. 174; Lakatos, 1926, p. 655). Cholnoky was also critical, drawing attention to the British policy of the Nile and the dangers of their Sudanese dam-building efforts for Egypt (Cholnoky, 1924, p. 114). He sarcastically remarked about the plans and their consequences: „But what does the English care about that" (Cholnoky, 1924, p. 116).

7. Culture and Anthropology

The subject of culture and anthropology also appeared in the journals, but because of their sporadic appearance, the reader of the era could only get a very fragmented picture.

Egypt was considered by contemporaries to be very rich in cultural heritage, and according to Vogt, few countries were so diverse (Vogt, 1931, p. 75). The ancient monuments, the pyramids, and the climate were all attractive and encouraged the development of tourism (Vogt, 1931, p. 75; Nemes, 1939, p. 303). Moreover, Dorothea G. Schumacher argued that anyone who wanted to know about Islam had to go there. Surprisingly, the authors only briefly mentioned the role of El-Azhar[19] in the Islamic world (Schumacher, 1930a, p. 140; Kürthy, 1936, p. 17).

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, there were also only short articles by Schumacher and László Kádár. Regarding the holidays, Schumacher described the celebration of the flooding of the Nile and the birth of the Prophet in a literary style: „In the warm, clear night by the Nile, this oriental music has a magical effect" (Schumacher, 1930a, p. 140). She also mentioned the situation of the peasants, the fellahs (Schumacher, 1930b, pp. 180–182). She described the conflict between the two

[19] El-Azhar University is located in Cairo and has been one of the most prestigious educational institutions in the Islamic world since the 10th century.

major social groups, the fellahs[20] and the Arabs. While Schumacher was positive about the former, emphasizing their work ethic, she was very negative about the latter: „The Arab, proud of his ancestors, is a great master in dreaming; an idle idler" (Schumacher, 1930b, p. 180). Among these writings, it is worth mentioning Imre Gyomai's literary description of Cairo, „Kairói Baedeker" [Baedeker of Cairo] (Gyomai, 1935, pp. 337–345). There were also comments about the dual impact of modernization on the East, where the writers distinguished the city from the countryside. The former was portrayed as belonging to the West, in some cases corrupt and cold, while the latter as a place where hospitality and the ideal of traditional life survived (Schumacher, 1930b, p. 180; Kádár, 1935a, p. 65; Nemes, 1939, p. 303).

8. Bilateral Relations

Bilateral relations played a major role in journals, especially in the 'Közgazdasági Értesítő', indicating the Hungarian intention to develop mutual economic activities. In this respect, Petheő, cited above, should be mentioned in particular, who highlighted Turkey and Egypt as countries in the Levant region where Hungarian exports had great potential (Petheő, 1935a, pp. 16–19). Alajos Paikert agreed with him when he created a list of Eastern countries that offered opportunities for Hungarians: „There are so many interesting countries, peoples, territories, and opportunities where few Hungarians live, but where there are countless opportunities for distinction, for gaining wealth and power" (Paikert, 1930, p. 7). During the period, relations between the two states expanded in all areas and a sense of mutual sympathy developed between them. Spectacular successes were achieved, especially in the commercial and technical fields, which were welcomed by the contemporaries (Suhay, 1938, p. 645; Kertész, 1937, p. 929). The good relations were also demonstrated by the fact that Paikert was asked to organize the Egyptian Agricultural Museum (Turán, 1931, p. 59).

Concerning the economic sector, the Hungarian part of the process was led by Jr. Miklós Horthy and the Hungarian-Egyptian Trading Company (Kertész, 1937, p. 929). Although the volumes were indeed increasing, contemporaries also noted that the economic relations were still in their beginnings (Kertész, 1937, p. 929). Kálmán Petheő, who published an important article entitled „Magyar-egyiptomi gazdasági kapcsolatok" [Hungarian-Egyptian Economic Relations] (Petheő, 1936, pp. 24–28), is unavoidable in this field. Besides the economic overview, he pointed out that in 1932 he had formulated proposals for cooperation, which he submitted to both the Hungarian Foreign Office and the Egyptian government. According to his own admission, he proposed the establishment of a trading company (Petheő, 1936, pp. 24–25). His summary clearly revealed the raw economic interests of Hungary, which, according to Petheő, needed primarily industrial raw materials - raw wool and rawhide - in exchange

[20] The agricultural population of Egypt, who are common descendants of the ancient Egyptians and the Arabs.

for which, in his view, Hungary could export almost any commodity[21] to Egypt (Petheő, 1936, p. 26). The expert did a comprehensive job, as he also informed the readers of the 'Közgazdasági Értesítő' where they could find relevant and important economic data about Egypt (Petheő, 1936, p. 27). The economic journal also published major milestones such as the export of flour after 15 years and the signature of the trade treaty (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1928d, p. 13; 1930b, pp. 1–4). The success of the Hungarian machinery industry was also given special attention in the journals. The 'Közgazdasági Értesítő' published articles entitled „Gépek és készülékek piacca Egyiptomban" [Machinery and Devices Market in Egypt], while Szieberth published articles on the subject entitled „Magyar gépek a Nílus mentén" [Hungarian Machines along the Nile] and „Az Árpádok Egyiptomban" [The Árpáds in Egypt] (Közgazdasági Értesítő, 1928d, p. 13; Szieberth, 1935a, pp. 74–76; 1935b, pp. 826–828). These revealed that the pumping stations in the Nile dam system had been installed by the Ganz factories (Szieberth, 1935a, 74–76). Szieberth triumphantly noted that „the Ganz factories in Budapest, as on so many other occasions, were able to take their place in this very keen competition among the world companies" (Szieberth, 1935, p. 76). The other focus of the technical writer was the "Árpád"[22] high-speed trains, which he considered to be the conquest of Egypt by Hungarian technology (Szieberth, 1935b, pp. 826–828).

9. Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to examine, through selected periodicals and authors, the image of Egypt that emerged in the minds of contemporaries in the period between the two world wars. The research found that the works from different backgrounds focused on a few main areas. Thus, writings on travel, the Nile and river management were popular. There was also a strong focus on the economic life of Egypt, motivated primarily by the desire to export Hungarian manufactured goods and the need to import of raw materials. Although the authors saw Egypt's history as unique, articles were published only on the ancient and modern periods. In addition, great power games were among the most popular topics. In these writings, the authors not only described the processes but also commented on them. Most of them were critical of British colonialism and supportive of Egyptian independence aspirations. As far as culture was concerned, there were very few publications that contained only a few anthropological descriptions. Bilateral relations focused on deepening trade and Hungarian engineering products. On the whole, a relatively large number of articles on the distant country appeared in leading scientific and cultural journals, which the study has tried to present and interpret in the appropriate order. However, several sub-issues and sub-problems require further research, the results of which could be the subject of further studies.

[21] This is a rather strong and exaggerated expression, but the author thought.
[22] Árpád was the leader of the Hungarian tribes during the conquest of the Carpathian basin.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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"Abu Ramla": László Almásy's Short Biography[1]

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Abstract:

László Ede Almásy, to whom the Bedouins deservedly bestowed the name "Abu Ramla" meaning "Father of Sand", was one of the most famous Hungarian explorers of Africa and the Sahara. Beyond that, he was a professional car racer and pilot. Throughout his expeditions he gained world fame. Many books and several films have been devoted posthumously to his adventurous life. Almásy mapped countless previously unknown parts of the desert and rediscovered the Oasis of Zerzura, known from legends. Furthermore, at the rock spring of Ain Dua in the Uweinat Mountains, he found prehistoric cave paintings whose significance rivals the paintings of the Altamira and Minateda caves. Despite his success, he faced many difficulties during his life such as financial problems and participation in two World Wars. Due to his service in *Deutsches Afrikakorps* (German Africa Corps), proceedings were brought against him by the People's Court. The aim of this study is to give a brief overview of László Almásy's fascinating biography, focusing on the years he spent in Africa.

Keywords:
Africa, László Almásy, Egypt, Sahara, Magyarabs, World War

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Introduction

László Ede Almásy, world-famous Hungarian researcher and explorer of Africa dedicated his entire life to desert research. Almásy became almost one with the desert. He was excellent at reading tracks, and he was able to navigate himself easily even in the midst of the endless seas of sand. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Bedouins gave him the moniker "Abu Ramla", meaning "Father of Sand". He believed that the "*infinity of the desert cleanses the body and the soul*" and that only here can one truly feel "*unshakable faith in the Being above us*" (ALMÁSY, 1934. p. 15). Almásy was an excellent pilot, scout, and car racer. As a young man, he took part in the First World War and the ensuing *coup d'état*[3], before setting off on expeditions to Africa and making maps of the undiscovered regions of the Sahara. The Egyptian Royal Family not only financially supported him, but also maintained a friendly relationship with him. After the outbreak of the Second World War, Almásy served in the army under the leadership of General Erwin Rommel, commander of the *Deutsches Afrikakorps*. As a result, at the end of the fighting, Almásy was brought before the judges of the People's Court. Although he had made his country proud with his expeditions, he had to flee from his homeland at the end of his life.

In my study, I would like to briefly present László Almásy's life's journey, which was full of unexpected and exciting twists and turns. First, I will describe the pivotal moments of Almásy's childhood, the years leading up to his trip to Africa, his car expeditions, and his work as a flight instructor. Then, I will discuss his most important discoveries in Africa, focusing on the Oasis of Zerzura, the prehistoric cave paintings he explored, and his encounter with the Magyarabs. Finally, I offer the reader a glimpse of Abu Ramla's adventures during the Second World War and the criminal proceedings brought against him at the People's Court.

His Childhood

László Ede Almásy, the famous explorer of Africa and the Sahara, was born on August 22, 1895, in Borostyánkő, Hungary[4], on his family's noble estate, as the second child of György Almásy and Ilona Pittoni.[5] His origin and family background had a significant impact on his later career. His grandfather, Eduárd Almásy, was one of the founding members of the Hungarian Geographical Society, established in 1872. He was a well-travelled and cultured man, interested in travel, geographical discoveries, and geography. He liked to collect travelogues, regularly subscribed to German geographic journals, and always purchased the most up-to-date maps and atlases. His private library

[3] It was the attempt of King Charles IV of Hungary to regain his throne in 1921.
[4] Borostyánkő (in German: Bernstein) could be found in Burgenland (In Hungarian: Őrvidék) region in Austria.
[5] Ilona Pittoni came from an Italian noble family from Dalmatia.

contained over five thousand volumes, including around half a thousand books on geography, astronomy, meteorology, and geology. Thanks to Eduárd's passion for geography, he become a close friend of such well-known Hungarian travellers as Ármin Vámbéry, János Xantus, János Hunfalvy and Ottó Herman.

"Mr. Laci[6]" spent a considerable amount of time in his grandfather's library as a child, and despite his tender age, read scientific books there with great enthusiasm. His father, György Almásy, was an Asia-researcher, as well as a zoological and ethnographic collector, who often made ornithological observations in his spare time. From Kyrgyzstan, he brought numerous ethnographic objects, trophies, and stuffed birds to the family castle. His love of birds also had a great influence on László. Later, it encouraged him to make ornithological observations just as his father did, and probably also this was the source of his interest in flying. (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 21–33).

Almásy completed his primary education at the Borostyánkő Folk School. As he was a private pupil, he only had to visit the educational institution personally when he took his exams. At that time, his governess, Ágnes Mayer, helped him with his studies. Studying together paid off. According to his 1902 school certificate, the boy achieved excellent results in almost all subjects. He excelled in language learning too. Since he spoke mostly German with his mother, and also had a French governess for a time, his language skills could improve rapidly. Moreover, he often conversed in Russian with his father's guests. In the course of his later career, he mastered several dialects of the Arabic language to a high level. (Nemes, 2018, p. 44). He continued his studies at the Benedictine High School in Kőszeg, considered a particularly prestigious institution at that time. Most of his teachers were members of the Order of Saint Benedict of Pannonhalma. The high school organised several excursions and encouraged pupils to join the National Youth Bird Protection League. Every year, the teachers made a school festival to mark Birds and Trees Day, which was unusual in the country at the time. The nature-friendly attitude of the institution deepened Almásy's love for birds even more. However, his school results began to deteriorate. In 1909, he failed among other things in Latin, quantity theory, drawing and geometry, and thus brought shame to the family. Subsequently, he decided to continue his studies in Graz (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 33–56).

Flying occupied him more than his studies. At the age of fourteen, he built a homemade glider, and jumped off the edge of a quarry. However, the attempt went awry, and he fell ten meters into a stone pit. Although he broke his ribs and suffered other minor injuries, this did not discourage him, and he became even more interested in aviation than before. However, he soon had to leave Graz, as he accidentally hit the school principal with his bicycle, causing a huge scandal. During his studies in Graz, his health began to deteriorate drastically due to heavy smoking. Thus, in 1910, his parents sent him to Arosa, Switzerland, to live in a lung sanatorium for a year. Nevertheless, he could not quit smoking in Switzerland either. The family wanted László to learn to speak

[6] His governesses usually called him like that when he was a child.

English fluently, so they enrolled him in a technical training in Eastbourne, England. He studied there from 1911 until the outbreak of the First World War, but unfortunately, he was unable to complete his training due to the war. It was here that he became acquainted with the books of Frederick Selous[7] and Joseph Rudyard Kipling[8]. Furthermore, the British Museum's rich Egyptian collection drew his attention to desert research. Besides, Almásy, whom his British friends called "Teddy", encountered the scout movement here, of which he later became an important representative (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 33–56).

His Life Before Going to Africa

László Almásy's final years before his trip to Africa were shaped by three main components: The First World War, the ensuing *coup d'état*, and the scouting movement. Although these elements may seem completely different at first glance, there are many connections among them. All three factors came into Almásy's life through the contribution of the Roman Catholic bishop, Count János Mikes.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Almásy was only nineteen years old. Thanks to his studies in England, he was aware of the Entente's military superiority, yet he enlisted as a volunteer soldier and remained loyal to the Central Powers. (BFL XXV. 1.a 3501. 1946. pp. 13-14.) "*As a rookie soldier, he enthusiastically participated in the fights and won many awards, including first- and second-class silver valour medals and bronze valour medals*" (Kubassek, 2018, p. 59). He was first sent to the Eastern, then to the Italian front. In the second place, he became infected with malaria in 1916 and, as a result of this illness, he met Bishop János Mikes[9], who personally visited soldiers on the battlefield and spent much time in field hospitals providing spiritual support and religious advice to the wounded. Although King Charles IV and Queen Zita offered him the bishopric of Veszprém, which would have brought him greater prestige and income, Count János Mikes refused it because he did not want to leave his beloved Szombathely.

After the end of the war, Almásy faced with many difficulties. On the one hand, he was forced to interrupt his studies because of the fighting. On the other hand, he suffered from financial problems. As he was only the family' second son, his brother János inherited the family's property and the estate's income. László and his sister Georgina received only a monthly contribution from their brother, leaving them financially vulnerable. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, following the Treaty of Versailles, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy disintegrated and Borostyánkő, Almásy's hometown, became part of Austria. Then Bishop Mikes asked László to become his private secretary. To fulfil his duties, he relocated to the bishop's palace in

[7] Frederick Selous was a well-known British explorer and Africa researcher.
[8] Joseph Rudyard Kipling was a famous English writer and poet who won Nobel Prise for literature. He was the author of the novel, called "The Jungle Book".
[9] In 1939 János Mikes was appointed as titular archbishop by the Pope.

Szombathely, which soon became one of the main centres for the organisation of the royal *coup.*

King Charles' idea was to "*address a proclamation from Szombathely to the people of the country and announce that he will begin to seize the royal power. He thought that Szombathely will be the royal centre, from where he would firstly consolidate his power in Transdanubia, and then gradually extend it to the entire country"* (Kubassek, 2018, p. 81). However, the bishop did not support the king's idea, believing that the royal declaration would divide the nation and could provoke civil war, as not everyone had legitimist sentiments in Hungary. He, therefore, suggested that His Majesty should travel to Budapest and negotiate about the peaceful transfer of power with Governor Miklós Horthy.

Almásy accidentally found himself in the political spotlight when, as a driver, he accompanied the last Habsburg monarch to Buda Castle at the end of March 1921. Nonetheless, Horthy refused to voluntarily relinquish power, as he believed that, neither the Entente nor the neighbouring countries would accept the king's claim to the throne, and he did not want to take the possible risk of a war. Thus, after the failed attempt, Charles IV was forced to return to Szombathely.

Almásy recalled his meeting with the monarch as the following: "*When His Majesty was in Szombathely in 1921, I was assigned to be his assistant, and during that time the King - remembering the submission he had written down - consistently addressed me as a count, and this continued in the legitimist circles of that time, and it also came up in the press. You can imagine, how often my brother and I find ourselves in the situation of protesting against the title of count, which many people insist on to satisfy their own vanity*" (Nemes, 2018, p. 110). It can therefore be said that the non-existent title of Count Almásy entered the public consciousness thanks to Charles IV, even if Almásy never actually held the rank.

Although Almásy did not play a key role in the planning of the royal coup, as a legitimist he supported the restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy. As a result, he became politically unreliable in the eyes of those in power and could no longer enjoy the sympathy of the political elite. Due to his financial difficulties, he was unable to follow the monarch to Switzerland, where His Majesty was exiled. After the failure of the *coup d'état*, Almásy found himself alone and had to look for other solutions. In the end, he came to the conclusion that it would be better to leave the country, so he returned to England for a short time (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 70–98).

After his return to Hungary, he turned his attention to scouting. The scouting movement was closely linked to the church. The characteristics of the true scouting spirit included the religious and moral foundation, loyalty to the king, patriotism, willingness to help, community thinking and the love of nature. It rejected all extremist ideologies, including Nazism and Bolshevism. All these ideas were clearly reflected in Almásy's way of thinking. Bishop Mikes generously supported the Hungarian scouts with his donations

and was asked to be the figurehead of the National Association of Hungarian Scout Parents and Friends. In the holy year of 1925, thanks to his help, the Szombathely scouts were also able to travel to Rome, where they took with them a flag inaugurated by Queen Zita, which was then solemnly blessed by Pope Pius XI. From that year onwards, Bishop Mikes also organised an annual scout camp in Répceszentgyörgy. Almásy became one of the leaders of the scout movement in Vas County and, in May 1921, was elected an officer of the Hungarian Scout Association. He published several articles in the magazine titled 'Cserkészfiú' (*Boy Scout*). He tried to use the international connections he had acquired in England to the country's benefit. Thanks to his diplomatic relations, the Hungarian Scout Association was accepted as a member of the International Scout Association in 1922 (Kapiller, 2013). Nevertheless, his most important scouting-related activity was the preparation of the 1933 World Scout Meeting in Gödöllő. At the Gödöllő jamboree, Almásy represented the "Rákóczi team 48", founded in 1920. (Kasza, 1995, pp. 90–98).

In conclusion, Almásy's life was full of adventures in the last few years, before he travelled to Africa for the first time. He gained a copious amount of experience, which proved useful for his research. He was also able to make the most of the new circle of acquaintances he had built up during this time.

His Love for Driving Cars and Planes

László Almásy was interested in automobiles and airplanes from a very young age. Thereby, he was extremely happy when he received a mandate in 1922 from the Austrian company, called Steyr to sell the company's cars. Although he immediately accepted the offer, at the same time he remained the private secretary of Bishop Mikes. Fortunately, his financial problems were seemed to be temporarily solved.

With the support of Steyr Company, he reached Africa for the first time in 1926, when he and his brother-in-law, Antal Eszterházy went to an exploration by using one of the cars of the company. Originally, Eszterházy came up with the spontaneous idea to go to Sudan together for hunting, while they were skiing. Firstly, they went to Alexandria by ship, then they hired firearms in Cairo. Here they finalised their itinerary, according to which they will travel along the Nile by car to Aswan, from where they will continue to sail by steam barge to Wadi Halfa. After that, they will cross the Nubian desert, then drive to Khartoum on the right bank of the Nile, and from there going to the Dinder area[10], where they can start hunting (Mohamed, 2015, p. 91). Before starting the tour, Almásy obtained a letter of recommendation from the Egyptian Minister of Transport, so the use of roads, bridges and railway lines became available to them without any difficulty. The trip was by no means without danger. They got into sandstorms several times, and the car often got stuck among the large sand dunes. The

[10] The Dinder is the tributary of the Blue Nile.

distance between Wadi Halfa and Khartoum was about 1,300 kilometres. Almásy and Eszterházy hoped that the Steyr car they were driving would be the first vehicle that would be able to cross the barren sand and rock world of the Nubian and Berber deserts. Their expectations were fulfilled, because they indeed became the first people, who crossed the above-mentioned deserts by car. Finally, the two men reached the valley of the River Dinder in safety. The expedition triggered a great press response in Hungary, and the incident was also reported in the Arabic newspapers. That was the time when the Egyptian elite became aware of Almásy's name for the first time. Almásy donated some of the wild animals he had hunted in Sudan as a trophy to the Savaria Museum of Szombathely (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 99–112). Almásy commented on his first visit to Africa as the following: *"We did not intend to achieve some record performance when we decided on our trip to Egypt. Actually, we had no idea about it, and I confess, we didn't really care about how far we could go forward by the car. The fact that later we included Sudan in our itinerary, and we were the first who accomplished the nearly 3,000-kilometres long journey, came about almost by accident, completely by itself"* (Nemes, 2018, p. 166).

In 1927 Almásy successfully completed an approximately seven hundred kilometres long test driving between the valley of the Nile and the Bahariya Oasis by using one of the vehicles of the company. Taking advantage of Almásy's newly acquired reputation, in the same year, Steyr commissioned him to represent the company in Cairo. They hoped that in this way they could create a market for themselves in Egypt too (Mohamed, 2015, p. 91). Almásy represented the Steyr factory with several cars at the international automobile exhibition, held in Cairo and won many car races under the name of the company. He took part in lots of discovery trips and hunting expeditions with the company vehicles. He received financial support from aristocrats, who were interested in exotic hunting, and in order to create the inevitable financial background for his trips, Bishop János Mikes also lent him a large amount of money.

In 1928, Almásy organised a hunting expedition around the watershed of the White Nile, and in 1929 he set off on a car discovery trip to the Eastern Sahara. Prince Ferdinand von Lichtenstein, Anthony Brunner and Rudi Mayer accompanied him on the latter trip. "*At Almásy's suggestion, they were the first to cross the swamp world*[11] *of South Sudan, called as Sud, which was believed to be impassable by car*" (Kubassek, 2018, p. 133). The local inhabitants encountered Europeans at the first time when Almásy and his travelling companions appeared on their previously untouched land. In addition, the participants of the Almásy-Lichtenstein expedition were also involved in other adventurous situations during the discovery trip. For example, they were once captured by the Nuers[12], from whom they could only manage to escape by using tricks. Almásy somehow persuaded them to stand in a circle and hold the car's ignition cable. While the capturers were hit by the electric shock, the explorers quickly escaped. The

[11] Nowadays, this area is called Badigeru Swamp.
[12] The Nuers are an ethnic group from South Sudan. Their members are mostly shepherds.

most memorable section of the trip involving East Africa, Sudan and Egypt was the Wadi Halfa–Selima Oasis–Kharga road section. In the Libyan desert, between the Selima Sand Plain and the Kharga Oasis, there was an abandoned ancient caravan route that connected Central Africa to Egypt. This part of the road was also called as the journey of forty days[13] since the nearly two thousand kilometres long distance could be covered in the past about that amount of time. Due to the bad climatic circumstances and the poor travelling conditions, many slaves, and animals, intended for sale, had died in this area in the past. Therefore, the desert was full of the remains of human and animal bones. Almásy decided to continue here the last section of the journey with his companions. Starting from Wadi Halfa, they travelled approximately 1,400 kilometres. The rediscovery of Darb El Arba'īn, which had been abandoned since the Mahdi uprising, brought enormous fame to Almásy in Egypt. (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 112–146). Finally, it is worth mentioning among his car trips, the hunting expedition he led in the Libyan desert in 1935, in which Count Zsigmond Széchenyi[14] and Jenő Horthy[15] also participated. During the hunting, started from Wadi Halfa, they were travelling along the Nile.

In 1930 as a result of the world economic crisis, Almásy was fired from the Steyr company, thus he started to suffer from financial difficulties again. Fortunately, his achievements regarding the mapping of the Libyan desert, attracted the attention of the Egyptian Royal Family, through which he could gain a significant social capital. He made friendship with the Egyptian prince, Kemal Din Hussein, and later he also developed a good relationship with King Farouk I. The Royal Family supported the explorer's discovery quests with considerable financial assistance, which for instance made it possible for him to go on a camel expedition from Sudan to Abyssinia.

His passion for sports flying has accompanied Almásy since his childhood. His accident in the quarry did not stop him from flying and in 1914 he bought his first own airplane. In 1933, at the world scout meeting in Gödöllő, he tried to make young people familiar with flying, and he wrote his youth novel, called 'Suhanó szárnyak' (Sliding Wings) with the same purpose in 1936. Nevertheless, he could invest his talent to the greatest extent in Egypt, where at the request of Taher Pasha, he started to work on the establishment and organisation of a new flight school. By founding the Royal Egyptian Aero Club, Almásy laid the foundations of sport aviation in Egypt and became one of the most determining figures of this sport in the country. He earned sufficient income from airplane sales and flight trainings. He visited Europe several times on business trips and sometimes travelled home to Hungary as well. At home, he wrote studies on

[13] In Arabic: Darb El Arba'īn.

[14] Count Zsigmond Széchenyi was an outstanding figure of the Hungarian hunting culture. He made Hungary's most important hunting book collection.

[15] Jenő Horthy was the brother of Governor Miklós Horthy. He wrote a book about his hunting experiences, which was published in 1937, under the title: "Egy élet sportja Vadászat-Lóverseny-Falka" (A Sport for Life: Hunting-Horse Race-Herd)

aviation to facilitate national defence training, and in the summer of 1938, he also worked at the training school of the Hungarian Aero Association in Esztergom as an instructor (KASZA, 1995, pp. 83–90). During one of his trips to Hungary, he gave an interview to the magazine, called *Esti Újság*. At first, the reporter asked Almásy about the Egyptian flight school, who reported that the institution accepted high school and university students who later could be trained as reserve pilots of the army. After that, he addressed appreciative words to the young people applying to the school, who have great ambitions and behave in a sportsmanlike manner during all circumstances. He mentioned that in Cairo they purchased new gliders from Hungary too. In 1937, for example, a plane called "Turul" was bought, with which an enthusiastic British officer in Egypt set a world record for a series of somersaults performed by an airplane at an altitude of three thousand meters. Finally, at the end of the conversation, Almásy praised the new Miklós Horthy National Aviation Fund. Based on his speech, he was filled with pride that even though Egypt was a richer state than Hungary, the latter still devoted a larger part of its budget on the development of aviation, due to the new measures (Góczán, 1938, p. 6). In 1939, László Almásy was chosen by the Hungarian government as one of the supervisors of the National Aviation Fund. At the request of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Almásy wanted to expand his aviation organising activity to Persia, but this could not take place because of the outbreak of the Second World War.

Investigating the Myth of Zerzura

Zerzura is a mysterious oasis town, named after the desert wheatear.[16] The legend of the city was already known in the Middle Ages. Its name first appeared in the Arabs' medieval book of alchemy, called *Kitab al-Kanuz*.[17] In the eyes of researchers, this place was as much a legend as the mysterious golden kingdom of Eldorado, and its exact location remained unknown. It was László Almásy who decided to unravel the mystery of Zerzura and find out whether the place of the fairy tales exists at all, and if so, is it just a *"ruined city or an oasis full of palm trees, flowing with milk and honey"* (Almásy, 1934, p. 117).

Almásy began to research in order to reveal the mystery. He collected and translated all the Arabic, French, English, and German reports he could find about the lost oasis. Then he arranged the collected materials in chronological order to filter out the reality from the ocean of tales and establish his own theory (Almásy, 1934, pp. 119–120). He decided to use the airplane for his research. His plan to find the lost city from the air was considered frivolous by many and lots of people laughed at him. Despite this, he still had supporters. His enthusiastic friend, Count Nándor Zichy, decided to fly

[16] A small dark-winged bird.
[17] The meaning of Kitab al Kanuz is the Book of Pearls.

with him and financially support the expedition. Moreover, an English car expedition, which started its trip from Cairo and intended to reach Cape Colony, deviating from its own route, undertook to follow Almásy's plane from the ground for a few weeks (Almásy, 1934, p 12).

The Hungarian newspapers proudly reported that Almásy went to discover the lost paradise of the Sahara. Among others, such periodicals as the *Pesti Napló* (Pesti Napló, 1931, p. 4.) and *Az Est* (Az Est, 1931, p. 12) informed their readers in detail in their columns about the ideas regarding the journey. The papers also mentioned that Almásy firstly went to London, where he bought a second-hand sports plane. Then he flew to Hungary to pick up his travelling companion, Count Nándor Zichy, in Szombathely. The next day they arrived in Budapest at the Mátyásföld airport, in order to depart from the capital and reach Cairo through Constantinople (Pesti Napló, 1931, p. 4; Az Est, 1931, p. 12).

However, Almásy's journey soon took a tragic turn. On 25 August 1931, their plane got stuck into a whirlwind above the cliffs of Taurus Mountains. After losing control over the vehicle, it started to move towards the mountain pass with an unbelievable speed. In his book,'Levegőben, homokon' (In the Air, on the Sand), the explorer recalled the most terrifying scene of the accident as the following: *"Now we are indeed dancing with the death, the machine is creaking and vibrating in its every component, throwing itself from one side to another... We are inside the porch of hell. Sometimes the engine screams with crazy revolutions per minute, as the tortured propeller tries in vain to hold on to the air flow that is pushing us forward, sometimes it buckles as the weight of the plane, hanging almost vertically, puts pressure on it"* (Almásy, 1937, pp. 26–17).

Fortunately, they were able to implement an emergency landing near to Aleppo, Syria. Almásy freed himself from his squeezed position, then climbed out of the plane and made sure that Zichy was not seriously hurt. László's left hand was bleeding because a piece of wood stuck into its side. His leg was bruised where the gas tank pressed it, but he managed to escape the accident without suffering serious injuries. With its engine forward, the plane bored into the ground, broke to two pieces at its waist, but its wings remained intact (Almásy, 1937, p. 28). After the disaster in the air, Almásy started to work at the Egyptian Institute of Cartography and devoted all his energy to organise expeditions to the Sahara. Therefore, the mystery of Zerzura remained unsolved for the time being.

On 1 May 1932, while flying in the company of the Scottish lieutenant-colonel, Penderel, and following the flight of the birds, Almásy spotted a large oasis that had not yet appeared on his map. It soon became clear that the unknown oasis located halfway between Kufra and Dakhla was the long-lost oasis of Zerzura (Pesti Hírlap, 1932, p. 3).

Near the area, he also discovered the northern main valley of Gilf Kebir[18] sandstone plateau, called Wadi Abd el Malik[19], then he found Wadi Talh and Wadi Hamra. Although he did not find an open surface spring or pool of water in Zerzura, he noticed that there were groups of salt cedars[20] in some places. The characteristic of these plants is that they can only survive in places where their roots reach the groundwater. Because of this, he was sure that after digging a meter or two he would find an underground water source (Pesti Hírlap, 1932, p. 4). In his book, called 'Az ismeretlen Szahara' (The Unknown Sahara), Almásy reported that the oasis was a disappointment to him, because he could not find any proof that this barren rock bed might have been inhabited in the past. Only the birds gave him some comfort, as he saw two beautiful eagles, a few hawks, and many small black and white birds.

The oasis got its name from the latter species, therefore László shot one as a proof (Almásy, 1934, p 140). After that he returned there once again, but the things he experienced there made him disappointed anew. Hoping to find the remains of an ancient prehistoric culture, he explored every little spot of the valley. However, he did not find any treasures, nor did he come across any traces of the lost army of Cambyses.[21] There were not even stone tools or ancient rock paintings in the former river valley. Almásy came to the conclusion that the legends similar to the Zerzura myth are born from the survival struggle of the nomads to whom, during their difficulties, the water resources and pastures of the oases are worth more than any other treasure (Almásy, 1934, pp. 143–145).

Despite the fact that, Almásy was not satisfied with what he experienced in the oasis, his discovery had huge significance and thus his name got a rightful place in the history of the most important geographical discoveries in Africa forever. Solving the myth of Zerzura had an extraordinary importance in the field of desert research and at the same time it also opened the way for the development of new transport routes. After Almásy's pioneering discovery, he was nicknamed Abu Ramla[22] by the locals. The discovery of the legendary oasis became possible because *"sport and mechanics, these two great cultural values, were united in Almásy, who has the blood of scholarly ancestors, whose nobility is not only manifested in family traditions, but also in the nobility of his way of thinking. The nobleness of his thinking, combined with his youthful energy, made it possible for Almásy to commit himself to serve goals that do not promote individual interests, but carry the interests of larger communities"* (Kubassek, 2018, p. 73).

[18] The meaning of Gilf Kebir is Big Wall.
[19] The meaning of Wadi Abd el Malik is the Valley of the King's Slave.
[20] Salt cedar is also known as Tamarix.
[21] Cambyses was a Persian King, who reigned between 529-522 BCE. He occupied Egypt in 525 BCE.
[22] Its meaning is the "Father of Sand".

Discovering Prehistoric Cave Paintings

In early 1933, László Almásy, accompanied by the geographer László Kádár, set off on another expedition to the Gilf Kebir area. The aim of the expedition was to map the last unknown areas of the Libyan desert. Crossing the immense sandstone plateau seemed almost impossible, but in the caves of Gilf Kebir Almásy found unique rock paintings dating back to the Neolithic period. Almásy named the place Wadi Sura, meaning Valley of Pictures (Almásy, 1934, p. 200).

Almásy noticed a group of pictures of swimming people in one of the caves. This proved that there could be more or less permanent rivers suitable for swimming in the completely dry Sahara. In May 1933, the Africa researcher found further prehistoric human and animal depictions at the Ain Dua rock spring in the Uweinat Mountains. The engraved images also included animals once considered indigenous to the Libyan desert, such as antelopes, giraffes, elephants, and ostriches. Almásy concluded that these paintings were made either by nomads from Sudan who had already been familiar with these southern animals, or at a time when the Libyan territory was not yet deserted. According to the latter hypothesis, the drawings could date back several thousand years, since the climatic processes of this magnitude can only take place over thousands of years (Almásy, 1934, pp. 187–188). On May 12, Almásy found a cave above Ain Dua, containing approximately half a dozen paintings. They were about the same height as the surface of the lake could have been. The figures depicted were dark brown and with reddish-yellow hair. They held a short bow with a hooked end. On their shoulders, they carried a quiver with arrows on a white strap. Their hair was decorated with white feathers, and their bodies were embellished with white belts, arm, and leg ties. Among the animals, only cattle were represented, with four different horn shapes (Almásy, 1934, p. 196). In terms of value and integrity, this discovery rivalled the paintings in the Altamira and Minateda caves. As a result, the Uweinat Mountain soon became famous (Pesti Hírlap, 1933. p. 15).

The news of Abu Ramla's discovery of prehistoric rock paintings in the heart of the Libyan desert spread rapidly through the scientific world. However, it also had its drawbacks. A few people tried to steal Almásy's work and claim it as their own. Italian zoology professor, Lodovico Caporiacco, published Almásy's research in his own language, and a year later, the German ethnographer, Leo Frobenius also wanted to appropriate the findings of the Hungarian explorer. However, the fraud became disclosed, and caused an international scandal. Overall, Almásy profited from the lack of professionalism of foreign researchers, as the affair earned him worldwide renown. Several articles were published about him and his research in the German, English, and Italian journals (Kubassek, 2018, p. 357).

Meeting with the Magyarabs

Between 1934 and 1935, Abu Ramla attempted to map the vast plain in the middle of the Sahara, known as the Great Sand Sea. While buying petrol in Wadi Halfa and talking to the representative of the Shell company, he realised that the petrol deliveryman's name sounded peculiar. The light-skinned, eagle-nosed Arab man was called Ibrahim el-Magyar. Almásy, driven by curiosity, soon started to talk with him.

Ibrahim claimed to be from the "Magyar" tribe, and that he and his companions lived on an island, called Magyarab. His tribe originated in the distant land of Ruba (Europe), in the country of Nemza (Austria), from where their ancestors were taken as prisoners of war by Sultan Suleyman in the 16th century, to serve as border guards against the Nubians. In the afternoon, Almásy visited the Island of Magyarab, where approximately three hundred people lived at the time. He immediately noticed that the inhabitants did not look like Berbers or the Sudanese Arabs. The tribesmen also said that their ancestors had married local Berber girls in Africa, whose language they learnt and spoke alongside Arabic. Although they could not speak Hungarian, the sense of the Hungarian origin was still strong in them. They knew that there were Hungarians living in Europe, whom they considered their brothers and sisters, and they looked forward to the moment when one of the Hungarians would visit them.

On the same day, the British governor received Almásy, who informed him of his interesting discovery. Almásy was astonished to learn that the governor not only knows about the tribe's existence but is even surprised that the famous Africa researcher had not heard of them until now.[23] The governor described the Magyarabs as good soldiers and loyal servants (Almásy, 1937, pp. 104–107). Nevertheless, Hungarian readers did not hear of this news until a few months later, in 1936, in the *Pesti Hírlap* report, and they greeted the story with great enthusiasm (Pesti Hírlap, 1936. p. 39).

With Rommel's Army in Libya

After the outbreak of the Second World War, Africa in general - and Egypt in particular - became an important battlefield for both the Axis and Allied Powers. Italy's fascist dictator, Mussolini, had his sights set on the region, but the British Empire could not afford to lose the Suez Canal, as it was the principal link between them and their Asian colonies. As a result, even though Italian troops were outnumbered by five times, they suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Commonwealth forces in the February of 1941. Consequently, the Germans were forced to rush to Africa to help their ally.[24] The

[23] The governor reflecting to Almásy's discovery, even joked about that if the origin of the Magyarabs had been revealed earlier, how the Wilsons would have received it at the Paris Peace Conference, if Hungary had submitted a territorial claim to the tiny island along the Nile.

[24] Of course, the annexation of Egypt was also in the interests of the Germans, since in addition to obtaining the Suez Canal - and the advantages inherent in it - access to the oil regions of the Middle East and the Caucasus would have become much easier for them.

war also brought serious changes to László Almásy's life. The British chased him out of Egypt, forcing him to abandon his research for a while. He returned to Hungary, where he served as a pilot in the Royal Hungarian Air Force. On February 8, 1941, at the request of the Germans, under the leadership of the German *Wehrmacht*, he was transferred to the African front, where his expertise in desert research and aviation was much in demand (Kasza, 1995, pp. 99–122).

General Rommel was able to take advantage of Almásy's service at the *Deutsches Afrikakorps*, where the Hungarian explorer first became an air force lieutenant, then a commissioned officer of cartographic aerial reconnaissance. In December, he was promoted to officer in the cartographic and geographical Luftwaffe's office in Berlin, responsible for organising German intelligence activities. He set up Operation Salaam, with the aim of smuggling two German spies behind the British front lines. Almásy prepared the necessary things for the operation by himself (e.g., military equipment, radio sets, food, water tanks and aluminium ladders, used to prevent the car from getting stuck in sand pits). Moreover, he chose the navigation equipment to be used during the mission.

The action began on April 29, 1942, in Tripoli. Almásy then went to al-Agheila, and then to the fortress of Gialo, to smuggle the German intelligence officers, Johan Eppler and Hans Gerd Sandsted to British occupied Cairo. Almásy and his group, approaching from the west, heading to south, bypassed the immense sandstone plateau of Gilf Kebir. They pumped gasoline from the abandoned British vehicles, found along the way, and then sprinkled sand into their fuel tanks to render them unusable by the British. They easily overcame the initial navigational difficulties, and ten days after setting off, they reached the Kharga Oasis, where an Anglo-Egyptian military checkpoint was set up. Their clothes resembled those of the British soldiers, and to deceive the inspectors, they spoke to each other sometimes in Arabic, sometimes in English.

By the time the British realised the deception, Almásy and his companions had already gained an irreplaceable advantage. After their appearance in Kharga, the British immediately alerted the units of the Long Range Desert Group[25] and more than half a thousand patrols began to follow them. In the meantime, they reached the Japsa Pass and Almásy let the two spies continue their journey along the Nile, who then arrived the capital of Egypt by land, without encountering any difficulties (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 235–275).

Almásy's return was even riskier. The enemy had already got wind of his presence, thus he could not play the same trick on them. He should have taken a detour, but a longer route was out of question due to the lack of fuel and water, so he had to find a third possibility. Fortunately, in his escape, he stumbled across a desert warehouse left unguarded by the British, from where he stocked up on water, food, and patrol. He

[25] This was the name of the British desert patrol group.

planned to cross the rift valley, east from the entrance to Wadi Sura, the so-called Akaba Strait, which was laden with boulders and deep ravines. As it was virtually impossible to cross this area by vehicle, the British did not set up a garrison here, contenting themselves with place a few grenades at the entrance to the valley. Almásy deactivated some of these grenades and made his way over the pass.

After reaching the German lines, he went to the German headquarters, where he personally announced the success of the operation to Rommel. He was awarded the German Iron Cross for his heroism and promoted to reserve major in October. Although Operation Salaam ended successfully, Johann Eppler and Hans Gerd Sandsted's luxurious lifestyle attracted too much attention, and the British soon exposed them (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 235–275).

In the October of 1942, Almásy was repatriated from the African front, and wrote a book about his experiences on the North African battlefield, titled 'Rommel seregénél Líbiában' (With Rommel's Army in Libya), which was published by Stadium Publishing Company in 1943. (BFL XXV. 1.a 3501. 1946. p. 28.) Under the Kállay government, his work received excellent reviews. The periodical, *Új Magyarság* wrote about it as the following: *"This book ranks among the finest works of the recent war literature. This time László Almásy, the explorer, is not talking to the reader as a sportsman or a scientist, but as a soldier: one of the many soldiers of the African battlefield"* (Dékány, 1943, p. 5).

The magazine, *Magyar Élet* also praised the work. It characterised the novel as unusual and original, because it is not built around large-scale war events and does not seek to make an impact by highlighting the horrors of war. The reader can almost experience with Almásy the life of the soldiers on the African battlefield. According to the newspaper, *"Besides the author's excellent observation skills, good humour and great love for Africa, his individual modesty and deep human understanding are reflected in every line of his diary"* (Magyar Élet, 1943. p. 8). Finally, in the journal, *Ruszinszkói – Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap* the book also received considerable praise, when it was compared to a perfect painting, every stroke of which can be admired, because it hides the beauty and values in its every single line (Ruszinszkói – Kárpáti Magyar Hírlap, 1943, p. 4.).

After the Second World War, the previously positive perception of the book changed radically. In 1945 it was added to the index of 'Fascist, anti-Soviet and anti-democratic press products' (Bálint et al., 1945, p. 1). The journals *Népszava* (MTI, 1945. p. 4) and *Magyar Közlöny* (Magyar Közlöny, 1945. pp. 6-9.) also classified it as a fascist and anti-Soviet book, and subsequently, during the court proceedings against Almásy, the prosecution tried to use the work as evidence against him.

In front of the People's Court, Almásy László's Last Years

During Almásy's absence, one of the neighbouring families moved into his apartment on Bartók Béla Street 29, whose members denounced the Sahara researcher with false accusations in order to seize his property forever (Kasza, 1995, pp. 129–134). As a result, the Soviet NKVD[26] and the Hungarian Political Police detained Almásy several times between April 1945 and February 1946 (Szabad Szó, 1946, p. 1; Délamerikai Magyarság, 1946. p. 2). In addition, in February 1946, criminal proceedings were brought against him by the People's Court.

Even though Almásy fought on the side of the Germans, he was not a member of the Arrow Cross Party or any other right-wing organisation. On the contrary, he even helped to hide Jews at the time of the deportations. During his pre-trial detentions, he spent most of his time in the Markó Street Prison, in inhumane conditions. The overcrowded cells, which were unheated in winter, were full of bugs and smelled terrible due to the prisoners' limited toilet facilities. Vulnerability and insecurity mentally tormented the prisoners. Gyula Germanus, the world-renowned Hungarian orientalist and expert in Islamic cultural history, volunteered to testify on behalf of Almásy, whom he had met at al-Azhar University in Cairo. However, the People's Court rejected Germanus' application in the first round. The professor then paid a personal visit to Mátyás Rákosi, who had been one of his students at the Eastern Academy of Commerce. Following Rákosi's superior instructions, the People's Court overturned its earlier decision and agreed that Gyula Germanus should be heard as a witness (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 283–306).

Almásy's interrogation at the People's Court began on November 16. During the trial, he defended himself by claiming that he did not join the German army but served in the Hungarian army before being transferred to the Germans. He also said that he pinned his Hungarian insignia on the uniform he had received from the Germans, for which he had once been arrested by Italian field gendarmes. The Public Prosecutor, József Melczer in his indictment made Almásy's book "With Rommel's Army in Libya", the central subject of the charge. He complained that Almásy *"is praising the German camaraderie"* in the introduction to his book (Igaz Szó, 1946, p. 4). In his defence speech, Gyula Germanus explained that the book is nothing else just a war diary. Although the title may seem misleading, it is not intended to glorify the Germans. At the end of the trial, Almásy asked for his own acquittal, but the People's Court insisted on broadening the charges. The next negotiation took place on November 23. Almásy presented the declaration of the Hungarian Geographical Society, as well as the proclamation of Gyula Germanus and Lajos Weiss.

Almásy mentioned that with his humble scientific work and knowledge he always wanted to serve his nation. Moreover, Gyula Germanus's writing was able to testify that Almásy could not be the sympathizer of the Germans and the Arrow Cross Party,

[26] People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs in the Soviet Union was established in 1934, from 1946 until 1954 this law enforcement body was the Ministry of the Internal Affairs.

as his family had been mistreated by the Nazis. Lajos Weiss also reinforced Almásy's argument by asserting that László hoped for the victory of the Allied powers and helped his family financially, even though they were Jewish. (BFL XXV. 1.a 3501. 1946. pp. 45-46.) Beyond that, the explorer even wrote a letter to the Minister, in which he stated he had never been interested in politics and had only served as a soldier until he was obliged to do so by law. (BFL XXV. 1.a 3501. 1946. pp. 46-47.) In the end, the People's Court released Almásy on the grounds that he had joined the Germans on higher orders and not voluntarily (MAGYAR NEMZET, 26. 11. 1946. p. 5).

In Communist circles, Almásy's release aroused discontent. The columnist of the newspaper *Szabadság* also found the justification of the acquittal strange, as "*there were already many accused who were hanged, even though they also referred to following a higher order*" (Szabadság, 1946, p. 3). Consequently, in 1947, Almásy was arrested again. However, the cousin of the Egyptian ruler, King Farouk, bought the researcher out of the custody of the Hungarian authorities. Almásy crossed the Hungarian border illegally and stayed at his family estate in Borostyánkő for a short time. He then travelled to Vienna on a false passport issued in the name of József Grossmann. Then he went to Trieste. There he received British documents, which enabled him to travel to Rome. The NKVD agents followed Almásy's trail from Trieste, nevertheless he managed to escape from Rome to Cairo under adventurous circumstances. Alaeddin Mouhtar Pasha was already waiting there for Almásy, who at the time weighed no more than forty kilos (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 308-322.). Subsequently, the newspaper *Magyar Nemzet* reported the story of his escape in detail (F. E., 1948, p. 2).

In Egypt Almásy often visited local museums and he was a frequent guest at the Desert Research Institute, founded by order of King Farouk I. To earn money, he organised desert road trips, guided safaris, and taught sport aviation. In 1950 he embarked on yet another desert expedition to the Sahara in search of the lost army of the Persian ruler Cambyses, but was unable to complete this tour. In 1951, an amoebic infection attacked his body, causing an abscess in his liver. He had to return to Europe for medical treatment. He was taken to the Wehrle Sanatorium in Salzburg, where Professor Victor Wehrle personally carried out an operation on him, but was unable to save Almásy's life. On his deathbed, Almásy learned that he had been appointed Director of the Egyptian Desert Research Institute. The famous Africa researcher and explorer passed away in Salzburg on March 22, 1951 (Kubassek, 2018, pp. 322–332).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be said that László Almásy's life was full of exciting and unexpected twists and turns. He was an adventure-seeker from an early age, and his family background has contributed greatly to develop his interest in geographical discoveries and aviation from a tender age. His noble origins notwithstanding, he faced financial difficulties on several occasions, as his brother János inherited the estate. During

the First World War, he met Bishop Count János Mikes, who employed him as a private secretary and financially supported Almásy's subsequent expeditions.

The biggest turning point in Almásy's life occurred when he was able to visit Africa for the first time in 1926, thanks to the Steyr company. Subsequently, he drove through part of the desert by car that had not yet been mapped, organised hunting expeditions and laid the foundations for flight training in Egypt. Nonetheless, it was his discovery of the legendary Zerzura Oasis and the Neolithic cave paintings near Gilf Kebir that earned him the greatest renown. Remarkably, in 1935, he was the first to speak of the Arab tribe of several hundred people known as the Magyarabs, who claimed Hungarian ancestry.

He served as a pilot in the Second World War and used his expertise in desert research on the African front. As part of Operation Salaam, he helped smuggle two German intelligence agents behind the British front lines, earning him the German Iron Cross. However, after the end of the war, he was severely tortured. He was imprisoned several times, but finally, thanks to the testimony of Gyula Germanus, the People's Court dropped the charges against him. He spent his last years in exile in Egypt.

Abu Ramla's life has been the subject of numerous books and films. Many books and films have been made about Abu Ramla's life. Of these, the novel, 'The English Patient' is the most outstanding. Its film version, which was made in 1996, won nine Oscars. Thanks to the film, László Almásy's name became known worldwide. I would like to conclude my study with László Almásy's own words: *"And if some people would still ask me about what is the benefit to mankind of the exploration of a barren sea of rocks and sand, a few miserable patches of vegetation, or the discovery of a spring with a bad taste, why does such a thing need financial resources and personal risk to sacrifice, I can only answer with the words of the Bedouins: The desert is terrible and relentless, but who once has been there, must return to there"* (Almásy, 1934, p. 15).

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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The Role of Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the Yemeni Civil Wars[1]

Máté Percze[2]

Abstract:

The Arabian Peninsula was one of the defining regions of world politics in the last century and still is today. The states of the region have always tried to extend their influence on the peninsula, which has caused conflicts in several cases. In my study, I examine the intervention of Saudi Arabia and Egypt in the Yemeni civil wars of 1962 and 2015, and I also compare the two Yemeni conflicts mentioned above. I present the foreign and domestic political reasons for which Riyadh and Cairo participated in these struggles. Because of the interventions, the situation in Yemen can be interpreted not only as the internal affairs of the country, but also as one of the defining problems of the region. In my work, I review the regional power aspirations that characterized the period of the two civil wars. The following questions play an important role in my work: What are the similarities and differences between the Yemeni civil wars of 1962 and 2015? What are the local and global effects of the ongoing Yemeni armed conflict?

Keywords:

Egypt, Near East, regional power aspirations, Saudi Arabia, Yemen civil war

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The Yemeni Revolution and Civil War in 1962

On September 19, 1962, Muhammad al-Badr took over the leadership of the country after his father, Imam Ahmed, who died a day earlier. The new ruler sensed massive discontent and made many promises to his people about modernizing the country. These included the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, the modernization of the economy, healthcare, and infrastructure. An important promise for the Yemeni society was the creation of freedoms and independent courts, as well as the release of persons previously imprisoned for political reasons. (Prantner, 2009)

However, at that time the domestic political situation was already critical. The tribes rebelled several times, and the Yemeni intellectuals, led by university students, organized demonstrations. (Benke, 1997, p. 121) Muhammad's ascension to the throne also offended Yemeni conservatives, as they believe that only the 3,000-strong community of religious leaders, the ulema, has the right to elect the imam. In addition, the royal family did not clearly support Muhammad's ascension to the throne. The situation was further complicated by the fact that among the army officers there was also an organization for the removal of the imam and the establishment of the republican system. These officers organized their own movement in 1961 as a result of the takeover of power in Egypt in 1952, which they named the Free Officers' Organization based on the Egyptian model. The Yemeni Free Officers openly followed Nasser's principles, which were based on pan-Arabism and the abolition of the monarchical system.

On September 26, 1962, military officers led by Abdullah Yahja al-Sallal and supported by Nasser overthrew the Yemeni imam Muhammad al-Badr, proclaimed the Yemen Arab Republic, and then set up the Yemeni Revolutionary Command Council (hereinafter YRCC), which functioned as the country's new government. The military officers planned to create a new state based on Nasserist foundations, and Nasser was the most committed supporter of the new Yemeni leadership. As a sign of this, Egypt was the first to recognize the new Yemeni government, even though the imam fled to the mountains, from where he started a civil war with the tribal forces loyal to him. Al-Sallal was confident of victory, so he declared in the company of the chieftains who supported the revolution that "The corrupt monarchy which ruled for a thousand years was a disgrace to the Arab nation and to all humanity. Anyone who tries to restore it is an enemy of God and man!" (Time, 1962) YRCC's foreign policy also showed many similarities with Egypt. He supported Arab nationalism and the creation of an Arab nation that would include all the free Arab states. Highlighting the importance of the Arab League and the fight against imperialism was an important element of the new Yemeni foreign policy. (Magyar Nemzet, 1962) One of the most important goals of Yemeni foreign policy after the revolution was to approach the countries of the Eastern bloc. The Yemeni Free Officers wanted to consolidate their position with Eastern support, especially by concluding arms deals, thus reducing the influence of Saudi Arabia and thus indirectly the Western powers in the region.

Al-Sallal and the Republican Party believed they enjoyed the support of majority of Yemenis, so they expected a quick victory in the civil war that broke out. However, they did not take into account the tribal and religious characteristics of the country, so when al-Badr fled to the northern highlands, the Zaidite tribes there immediately sided with him. Although Zaidism is a branch of Shiite Islam, there are many differences between the two religious trends, especially in habits, beliefs and the role of imams. The tribes of the region saw the imam as their religious leader who rules by the grace of Allah, meaning that for them anyone who fought against the imam was an enemy of Allah. (Prantner, 2009, p. 120) As the civil war escalated, both sides tried to win the loyalty and support of the tribes, who often switched sides. Already at the beginning of the civil war, it became clear that the revolutionary government led by al-Sallal did not have enough strength on its own to defeat the royalist forces supporting the Imam. At the same time, the royalists could not win a decisive victory without external help, which is why the role of Egyptian and Saudi intervention in the conflict was enormous.

The Egyptian and Saudi intervention

The Yemeni revolution that broke out in 1962 significantly affected the balance of power in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result of the events, the influence of the Egyptians in Yemen suddenly increased, which Saudi Arabia saw as a serious threat. For this reason, the Yemeni revolution and then the civil war appeared as a multi-level conflict from the very beginning. With the intervention of Cairo and Riyadh, the Yemeni civil war became a regional problem, and at the same time, the Soviet Union and the United States became involved in the events through the Egyptian and Saudi sides. The Arab states also expected the Arab League to solve the situation in Yemen, which is why the conflict affected the Arab community as well.

For Nasser, Yemen was an important state in several ways. From 1954, a significant political reorganization took place in the Middle East, which is also known as the Arab Cold War. The states of the region were grouped around two camps. Under the leadership of Nasser, the first camp was joined by those states where a republican form of government was established, supported Arab nationalism and pursued an openly anti-imperialist policy. The second camp included conservative, monarchical Arab countries whose existence was essentially threatened by Nasserism. In the early days of the Arab Cold War, Egypt and Iraq were the biggest rivals, however, after Iraqi military officers staged a coup against King Faisal II, Iraq was replaced by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia became the leader of that conservative, monarchist group and tried to isolate the Arabian Peninsula from what it considered dangerous external influences. As a result, the Yemeni revolution and the fate of the country became a regional issue.

After the dissolution of the United Arab Republic (hereafter UAR) in 1961, Egypt became politically isolated. The secession of Syria significantly weakened the most

important point of Nasser's policy, Arab nationalism, which is why the Egyptian president needed a serious political success. The events in Yemen provided an excellent opportunity for this, since in the event of a victory of the revolution, Nasser could argue the importance of Arab nationalism, and attribute the responsibility for the fall of the UAR to Syria. Khaled Mohieddin, an important officer of the Egyptian army, summarized Cairo's position as follows: "The war in Yemen was a response to the break with Syria...a sign that Egypt's Arab role has not yet ended [...] as Syria dealt a blow to Egypt's Arab leadership". (Orkaby, 2014, p. 45)

For the Egyptian leadership, Yemen's geographic location allowed it to pressure Saudi Arabia for economic aid, as well as support for nationalists fighting the British in the south. (Nutting, 1972, p. 351) Nasser wanted to win Yemeni public opinion for the YRCC and Cairo with the help of the fight against the British. It was also strategically important for Egypt, as the area could have been an advanced garrison of the Egyptian sphere of interest. On the other hand, it was close to the oil deposits vital to Saudi Arabia, which could be easily attacked in the event of a conflict.

As early as October 1962, Nasser sent military units to support al-Sallal, but as the civil war dragged on, the number of Egyptian troops also increased, by 1965 there were about 70,000 Egyptian soldiers stationed in Yemen. (Laron, 2017, p. 59) Due to the Soviet support, the Egyptian forces had a significant technical superiority, however, the terrain conditions in Yemen and the inexperience of the commanders made it impossible to take advantage of the favorable situation provided by the equipment. The Egyptian troops could not deliver a decisive blow to the royalists, on the other hand, their losses continued to increase, and participation in the civil war imposed a huge economic burden on Egypt. However, Nasser continued to insist on the support of the republicans and his foreign policy ambitions.

Egypt's intervention was also an excellent opportunity for the Soviet Union to gain influence in the region. Despite, the fact that Soviet foreign policy was initially tied up by the Cuban missile crisis, it provided significant support to al-Sallal's government through Cairo. As part of this, numbers of military advisers arrived in the country and took part in the training of soldiers and pilots. For Moscow, the situation in Yemen made it possible to reduce the influence of the United States and Great Britain on the Arabian Peninsula, and in addition, the Soviets could control one of the most important straits of world trade, Bab el-Mandeb, through which thousands of barrels of crude oil passed daily. (Ferris, 2013) However, the Soviet Union was not entirely sure of the final victory of the revolution and therefore did not want to fully commit to Yemen. Thus, Soviet support came mostly through Egypt, but the solidarity of Moscow and the Eastern Bloc was also shown in other ways. Socialist countries, including Hungary, allowed Yemeni university students to study in that country with scholarships, and also undertook other humanitarian assistance. (Prantner, 2005)

Relations between Saudi Arabia and Yemen have never been friendly. Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Saud, better known as Ibn Saud, the first king of Saudi Arabia, conquered significant territories in the early 1930s and tried to extend his authority to the entire Arabian Peninsula. However, its directions of expansion were quite limited. In the north, Iraq and Jordan, in the east, the small oil monarchies and Oman belonged to the British sphere of interest, meaning that attacking them would have drawn the wrath of the British. The only way left was Yemen in the south. Ibn Saud did not hesitate, in 1934 he started a war against his southern neighbor. Fighting with technological and numerical superiority, the Saudi soldiers easily defeated the Yemeni fighters with outdated weapons. During the war, Saudi Arabia conquered the provinces of Jizan, Najran and Asir.

In the Yemeni civil war, Saudi Arabia and Jordan supported al-Badr, the ruler of the country before the coup, while the new government was supported by Egypt, and thus indirectly by the Soviet Union. Riyadh did not send regular troops to Yemen, but sent weapons, ammunition, money, medicine, and Saudi trainers to train the royalist force. In addition, he recruited fighters for the imam from around half a million Yemeni nomads living in the areas bordering Yemen with Saudi Arabia. (HU-MNL-OL-XIX-J-11-j/1962/008062/1) In order to prevent Saudi supplies, the Egyptian forces continuously bombarded bases, airports, and caravans in the territory of the monarchy bordering Yemen. However, many civilians, including women and children, lost their lives in these bombings, as a result, Yemeni public opinion increasingly turned against the Egyptians.

Saud ibn Abdul-Aziz Al-Saud considered Nasser's radical nationalist and anti-monarchy views a serious threat. For this reason, he tried to prevent the formation of a new government under Nasser's influence in his immediate neighbor. The strained relations with Egypt had both economic and world political aspects. The Saudi king also feared that the stabilization of the new Yemeni government would allow the political, economic, and military advance of the Soviet Union on the Arabian Peninsula, which would have clearly threatened the fate of the dynasty. The Saudi monarchy was openly anti-Soviet and their biggest ally and trade partner was the United States of America, which made the eventual rise of the Soviets even more threatening due to these circumstances. (Rostoványi, 2011)

The crisis in Yemen has also affected American diplomacy. At the beginning of the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy still hoped that the USA would be able to maintain good relations with Egypt, and through that with other Third World countries. Part of this reconciliation plan was the promised American support for the construction of the Aswan Dam, which was eventually abandoned. The crisis that broke out in 1962 basically affected the region's political conditions, so the United States had to act as well. The US believed that the only way to prevent the conflict from spreading to Saudi Arabia was to recognize the new Yemeni leadership and prevent any outside interference. Accordingly, the United States officially recognized the Yemen Arab

Republic on November 12, 1962. (FRUS 1962) But because of this, the United States' relations with Saudi Arabia deteriorated, and even its allies openly criticized this move.

During the Yemen conflict, US Middle East policy was characterized by ambivalence. On the one hand, due to their economic interests, they had to protect Saudi Arabia, especially the Saud family. On the other hand, the Americans wanted to normalize their relationship with Egypt and prevent it from becoming even more committed to the Soviet Union. American diplomacy was not successful in this case, since Soviet support was already decisive in Nasser's policy, and at the same time, the Egyptian president did not trust Washington's Middle East policy. The US move ultimately harmed American-Saudi relations, which could only be remedied by new contracts beneficial to the Saudi side. (Barda, 1993)

In the Yemeni civil war, Britain also supported the Saudi policy, as the British were afraid of their interests around Aden. In the Yemen conflict, the two regional powers faced each other, with the great powers also standing behind them. As the civil war deepened, the Egyptian-Saudi diplomatic battle intensified. The Saudis accused Nasser that Egypt's politics are against Islam and that they only have Egypt's interests in mind, not the Arab states. Saudi Arabia was thinking about a separate plan including the Arab countries, the defining element of which is the Islamic religion. Nasser criticized the Saudi plan because, according to him, it was nothing more than a modified version of the Baghdad Pact, in which Saudi Arabia would have dominated the other Arab states.

The End of the Civil War

The civil war was also a serious challenge for the Arab League. League members were divided by the events in Yemen. While Egypt and Syria led the government of Abdullah Yahja al-Sallal, Saudi Arabia and Jordan supported Imam al-Badr. Among the members of the League, by 1963 Cairo's influence had strengthened, as a result of this, the majority of members recognized the leadership of the new republic of Yemen as the legitimate government, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Jordan.[3] In order to settle the conflict as soon as possible, the League adopted a resolution in September 1963, in which the organization called on its members to end hostilities. In addition, a resolution banned support for Imam al-Badr and ordered members to normalize relations with the Yemen Arab Republic. (Tuganova, 1969)

However, neither Saudi Arabia nor Egypt complied with the resolution. Riyadh continued to support the imam and did everything to overthrow the Yemeni

[3] After the 1956 Suez crisis, Nasser became extremely popular in the Arab world, from which he forged considerable political capital. Using this, he also had a strong support base within the Arab League, as many Arab states considered Nasser to be the leading figure in the fight against imperialism and the most important representative of Arab nationalism.

government led by al-Sallal. And Nasser refused to withdraw his troops fighting in Yemen. The 1967 Arab-Israeli war marked a radical turning point in the Yemeni civil war. In the Six Day War, Egypt suffered huge military losses, most of its forces were destroyed. After losing the war, Nasser had to change his previous foreign policy. Due to the economic crisis, it had a huge need for the rich oil-producing countries, but especially for Saudi Arabia. A significant milestone in Egyptian-Saudi relations was the Khartoum summit of the Arab League held in August 1967, where the participants accepted the resolution in which they consider the recovery of the territories occupied by Israel a joint task and therefore coordinate their political activities. At the meeting, President Nasser and the new Saudi King Faisal ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud agreed on the settlement of relations between their countries. However, one of the conditions in the agreement was that Nasser had to withdraw his troops from Yemen. For Nasser, in the post-war period, the military intervention in Yemen became unsustainable for several reasons. On the one hand, due to the economic crisis, it was unable to finance the supply of the Egyptian units stationed in Yemen. On the other hand, because of the Israeli threat, he needed all his troops, which he grouped around the Suez Canal. (Prantner, 2009)

At the meeting in Khartoum, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Kuwait undertook to provide financial support to the frontline states. The Saudis paid £50 million a year, which helped keep Egypt's economy from completely collapsing (Lugosi 2007, p. 402 – 403). King Faisal saw financial support as the most convenient way to end the crisis in Yemen. In addition, it proved to be a politically useful move, because the Saudis also used this gesture to increase their authority, saying that they were one of the biggest supporters of the Arab cause.

In accordance with the Khartoum agreement, Egypt finally withdrew its troops from Yemen, leaving Abdullah Yahja al-Sallal alone. After that, Saudi Arabia also stopped supporting the imam's party due to the divisions within the monarchist party and the exit of the Egyptian troops. After several years of civil war, the Yemeni leadership succeeded in consolidating the Yemen Arab Republic by 1970. However, the country continued to face serious economic and social challenges.

The Yemeni Civil War in 2014

The Yemeni civil war, which began in September 2014, is a multilateral civil war that became a regional conflict with the intervention of the Saudi-led coalition in 2015. In the civil war, the Shiite Houthi forces, also supported by Iran, are facing the forces of President Abd-Rabbo Mansour Hadi and the Saudi alliance supporting him. At the same time, taking advantage of the chaos caused by the civil war and supporting the Islamists in the country, the terrorist organization Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) also gained considerable strength. (Magyar Nemzet, 2017)

The conflict began when the Houthis, dissatisfied with the government of President Hadi, occupied the Yemeni capital, Sanaa. In March 2015, the rebels created the Supreme Revolutionary Committee, which launched an offensive against the president who controlled the rest of the country. Due to the rapid advance of the Houthis, President Hadi fled the country, and Saudi Arabia, at the head of a self-organized coalition, launched a military operation to restore the former Yemeni government. (CBC, 2015)

For Saudi Arabia, the new civil war was important in several ways. On the one hand, Riyadh still regarded the Arabian Peninsula as its own sphere of interest, and therefore intervened strongly in all cases when Saudi hegemony over the region was threatened. Since the "Arab Spring" of 2011, the desert kingdom has pursued an increasingly active foreign policy, the basis of which was to ensure the survival of the dynasty. In practice, this meant that during the revolutionary wave after 2011, the Saudis supported movements against the existing regimes in those countries that were not part of the sphere of interests in the narrow sense, and thus were geopolitically less important for the kingdom. At the same time, Riyadh immediately intervened in matters involving the monarchies of the Arabian Peninsula, such as in the case of Bahrain, where Saudi units helped suppress anti-government protests on March 14, 2011. (N. Rózsa and Szalai, 2016)

Reasons for the Saudi intervention

Riyadh saw the rise of Iran's influence in the advance of the Shiite Houthis. Saudi foreign policy tried to prevent the strengthening of Iranian influence in the region, as it believed that it threatened its economy and the existence of the monarchy. For this reason, the civil war of 2014 is not only the internal affairs of Yemen, but also the proxy war of the two dominant states in the region, Saudi Arabia and Iran. The Saudi-Iranian relations are extremely complicated and strained due to religious differences, different political systems and economic interests, as well as regional power ambitions.

The desert kingdom considered that it would have had extremely negative consequences if the forces of the Houthis had won in Yemen. The basis for this is that Riyadh accused Iran of supporting the Houthis, and therefore, with their victory, Tehran would have been able to indirectly control vital crude oil delivery routes. In addition, in the event of a possible military conflict, Yemen was of strategic importance, as it directly bordered the oil-rich areas of Saudi Arabia. Because of this, they could easily have dealt a blow to the petroleum industry, which was essential to the kingdom's operation. Riyadh's fear was not unfounded, since in 2019 a rocket attack hit the oil refineries of the Saudi giant oil company ARAMCO. (The New York Times, 2019) As a result of the attack, crude oil production dropped for a short time, but more importantly, it showed how vulnerable the desert kingdom was. At the same time, the world market price of crude oil rose temporarily, which clearly showed the position of

the monarchy in the supply of crude oil to the world. Although the Yemeni rebels immediately claimed responsibility for the attack, the Saudi government, along with the United States, blamed Iran, saying the Houthis would not have been able to carry out such an attack on their own. (Magyar Nemzet, 2019) But it is important to point out that Iran consistently denies that it supports the Houthi forces.

Another reason for the Saudi intervention is the rivalry between power groups within the dynasty. Salman ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, who was a direct descendant of the country's founder, Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman Al Saud, took the Saudi throne in 2015 at the age of seventy-nine. However, due to Salman's poor health, the country was gradually taken over by his son Mohammed ibn Salman, who wanted to quickly strengthen his position within the dynasty. The basis of Mohammed's policy was to restore the broken balance of power in the Middle East and stop the growth of Iranian influence. Action against the Shia threat gave him his own domestic political legitimacy as the heir to the Saudi throne. (N. Rózsa and Szalai, 2016) For this reason, the Yemeni civil war seemed like a good opportunity for him, as he believed that a military intervention would give him a quick victory that would consolidate his domestic power position and prevent damage to Saudi hegemony in the Arabian Peninsula.

In 2015, Mohamed ibn Salman, referring to the Iranian threat to the status quo of the Arabian Peninsula, set up a coalition in which many Arab countries participated. In addition to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Jordan participated in the air campaign, while Egypt provided naval and land support and Sudan sent a ground contingent. On paper, the victory of the allied Arab countries was unquestionable, as they had absolute air superiority, and their ground forces were also much more technologically advanced than the Yemeni rebel forces. However, the coalition's intervention could not win a decisive victory, instead resulting in a conflict with huge losses that is still going on today. The ineffectiveness of the allied Arab countries has many aspects. The members of the alliance hoped for a quick victory, but when the civil war dragged on and the losses increased, both Egypt and Morocco left the coalition. The different political interests of the members of the association also caused significant tensions. (Amaraia, 2020) Although the strengthening of the Houthi forces was considered a serious threat, they did not want to submit to Riyadh's policy. By the 2020s, the Arab coalition had practically fallen apart, only Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates held their own, but both countries were looking for ways to end the conflict.

At first, Egypt did not want to participate in the Saudi coalition because it remembered the loss it suffered during the previous invasion of Yemen. However, when the Houthi forces captured Aden on March 25, 2015, Egyptian policy also changed. Cairo joined the coalition for two important reasons: first, to maintain free navigation and security in the Red Sea, and second, to support its Gulf allies against Iran's power ambitions. To this end, he launched 4 warships towards Bab al-Mandab, which helped

set up the Yemeni blockade. In addition to the navy, the Egyptian air force also actively participated in the Yemeni conflict. (Trager, 2015) Egypt's participation was announced by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh. Shoukry at the Arab Summit held in Sharm el-Sheikh in March 2015: "Egypt has declared its political and military support, its participation in a coalition with an air and sea Egyptian force, as well as ground forces if necessary, given Egypt's historic and unwavering responsibility for the Arab and Gulf towards national security". (Egypt Today staff, 2018)

Effects of the intervention in Yemen

The basis of the coalition's military intervention was the use of the air force. The allied states believed that with air superiority they would be able to destroy the Houthi troops and cut off their supply lines. However, the Saudi leadership did not learn from Nasser's intervention in 1962, since the Egyptians dominated the airspace at that time but were unable to achieve a decisive victory. With the fact that Riyadh chose a military solution to the Yemeni crisis in 2015, it faced similar difficulties as the Egyptian forces during the previous conflict. Although Saudi Arabia did not participate in the 2015 operations alone, but as the most militarily significant member of the coalition, it still suffered painful losses.

Mohammed ibn Salman's intervention had the opposite effect than the heir to the throne expected. Mounting Saudi losses and attacks on oil facilities weakened his power within the kingdom and resulted in significant domestic political tension. The intervention in Yemen also had adverse effects on the Saudi hegemony over the Arabian Peninsula. On the one hand, due to the poor performance of the Saudi armed forces, especially the lack of air defense capabilities, the country's status as a regional power has weakened. On the other hand, the disintegration of the coalition affected Riyadh extremely negatively politically, as it was unable to keep together the alliance it created. Muhammad ibn Salman's political authority was significantly reduced by his differences with Qatar during the intervention in the civil war, and with Riyadh's encouragement, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt cut ties with Doha, which effectively resulted in the blockade of Qatar. The Saudi narrative accused Qatar of providing substantial funds to terrorist organizations and pursuing a policy too friendly to Iran. In fact, Qatar tried to distance itself from Saudi influence and did not shy away from relations with Iran. The interesting thing about the situation is that the blockade against Qatar also remained ineffective, because Doha's policy could not be changed, and even as a result of the blockade, Qatari-Iranian relations became even closer. During the blockade, Iran and Turkey airlifted food and other necessities into the country, and because of this, Riyadh's policy of starvation failed. Saudi Arabia and the states participating in the blockade saw the fall of the blockade, and therefore announced its lifting at the meeting of the Gulf Cooperation Council on January 5, 2021 in the city of al-Ula. (Ramani, 2021)

The Road to Peace in Yemen

After political and military setbacks, both Saudi Arabia and the UAE wanted peace, but only in a way that avoided further loss of prestige. The situation was complicated by the fact that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi envision the future fate of Yemen in different ways. At first, Saudi Arabia thought in terms of a unified Yemen under the leadership of President Hadi and with strong Saudi influence. However, this possibility has completely failed to date, as President Hadi issued a decree on March 7, 2022, in which he transferred his power to the Presidential Council, of which he himself is not a member.

The plan for a unified Yemen is also difficult to implement because the separatist groups operating in southern Yemen, who want an independent South Yemen, represent a significant force. The United Arab Emirates would support the latter solution, as it would maintain its influence in the region. It is very difficult to end the civil war in Yemen with lasting peace, because the conflict is taking place on several levels at the same time. On the one hand, it was between the north, dominated by the Houthis, and the south, dominated by separatist forces. The next level is the regional power struggle between Riyadh and Tehran, in which the civil war appears only as an afterthought. Finally, the confrontation between Saudi Arabia and the Emirates can also be observed, since both countries are pushing for a solution that suits their own interests.

Even though the Emirates and Saudi Arabia have been on the same side on some issues, such as the 2014 intervention in Yemen or opposition to the nuclear deal between Iran and the West, they are actually political rivals. In the background, the two countries are constantly trying to gain more influence within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and thus also in world politics. The main sources of conflict in the Saudi-Emirati relationship are oil policy, diversification and longer-term plans. Mohamed ibn Salman is trying to dominate the oil policy of OPEC and the GCC, thus practically putting the economic interests of the Emirate in the background. The rivalry between Riyadh and Abu Dhabi is also reflected in the vigorous modernization, the establishment of business relations with other countries and the logistical competition affecting the entire region. (Dunne, 2023) At the same time, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are also making sure that the rivalry between the two does not turn into a direct armed conflict.

However, there are also signs of the end of the crisis, and these are due to the fact, that all parties are interested in resolving the conflict. It cannot be ignored that since the outbreak of the crisis in 2014, Yemen has gradually, but increasingly, sunk deeper into the humanitarian crisis, which is now threatened by mass epidemics and famine. The first step on the road to peace would be to conclude a stable ceasefire. There have already been attempts in this regard, on March 26, 2022 the 20th unilateral three-day ceasefire was announced. On March 29, the Saudi side also announced a ceasefire and announced that it would stop all military operations in Yemen. From the point of view of peace, the biggest step forward is that both sides accepted the UN ceasefire for the month of Ramadan on March 31. Although the final peace is still far

away and further long negotiations await the parties involved in the conflict, the results so far give reason for confidence.

Conclusion

Since its establishment in 1934, the Saudi state has considered gaining and maintaining hegemony over the Arabian Peninsula as the basis of its own sphere of influence and security policy. With the outbreak of the Yemeni revolution in 1962, Saudi politics was forced to act, as it had to respond to Nasser's growing influence and political ambitions that also affected the monarchy. Because of this, the conflict in Yemen almost immediately became a regional power struggle, the stakes of which were to gain control over the region. Riyadh's intervention has had some successes and failures. It can be considered a Saudi success that Nasser finally withdrew his troops from Yemen, as a result of which the immediate danger to Saudi Arabia ceased. However, the withdrawal of the Egyptian military was primarily due to the disastrous consequences of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war for Egypt. However, the fact that President al-Sallal's forces managed to protect and later consolidate the republic was clearly a failure for the desert kingdom.

The crisis in Yemen that erupted in 2014 once again had a great impact on Saudi politics. In some respects, the new crisis resembled the civil war of 1962. In this case, too, a multi-level conflict was outlined, in which the Yemeni civil war, the Saudi-Iranian regional power struggle and Riyadh's conflict of interests. and Abu Dhabi are present at the same time. However, an important difference is that Saudi Arabia intervened armed in the conflict in 2015, at the head of the coalition it created. Although Mohammed ibn Salman had hoped for a quick military victory that would have strengthened his own position within the dynasty, instead a protracted conflict unfolded with significant casualties and threatened a humanitarian crisis. Due to the failure of the military action and the poorly functioning policy, Saudi Arabia lost a lot of its influence in the region, from which Iran primarily benefited. Saudi Arabia's blockade has negatively affected Qatar, as it has significantly limited Qatar's political opportunities, especially regarding The Middle East and North Africa region. Doha was surprisingly cautious about the blockade, as it wanted to avoid open confrontation with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

Máté Percze is a PhD candidate at Eötvös Loránd University. He is writing his doctoral dissertation on the geopolitical competition between Egypt and Saudi Arabia during the Cold War. His fields of study are the history of the Middle East in the 20th century, the Arab-Israeli wars and the influence of the superpowers on the Arab countries during the Cold War.

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Nándor Hidegkuti's Coaching Activities in Egypt[1]

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Abstract:

Nándor Hidegkuti, a former outstanding footballer and coach, is a personality who connects the Arab world and Hungary in the field of sports. This is particularly true in the case of Egypt, as he worked for seven years as a specialist manager in the North African country. After presenting the history of Hungarian-Egyptian sports and football relations, in the present study, I undertake to present the coaching career of Nándor Hidegkuti and, in particular, its period in Egypt, based on contemporary (primarily) press and archival sources. He coached the country's largest and most prestigious club, Al-Ahly, from 1973 to 1980. This period was one of the most successful periods in the history of the club.

Keywords:
Coach, Egypt, Football, Golden Team, Hidegkuti Nándor

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Introduction

If you are in Cairo and visit the headquarters of the Egyptian Football Federation, you can find a special commemorative plaque on the wall. The inscription, which can be read in Arabic and Hungarian, commemorates "two outstanding players of the legendary Hungarian Golden Team", Ferenc Puskás (1927–2006) and Nándor Hidegkuti (1922–2002). The plaque, inaugurated on 23 January 2011 in the presence of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, does not focus on Puskás's and Hidegkuti's excellent football career, but praises their performance as a football manager in Egypt. Grateful Egyptian football fans, and even the whole of Egyptian football community, will cherish their memory to this day, as both of them earned unparalleled merits in the flourishing of the country's football in the period after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. This episode in the life of the two world-famous Hungarian footballers is little known and researched, even though they almost idolize their person on the banks of the Nile. However, we must not forget that Hungarian specialists by that time already had a serious reputation in the "land of the pharaohs". Before the involvement of Hidegkuti and Puskás, two significant generations of Hungarian coaches were active in the country, and even the beginning of the excellent sports and football relations of Egypt dates back to the interwar period.

History, the Beginning of Hungarian-Egyptian Football Relations

The year 1924 can be considered the starting point of Hungarian-Egyptian football relations. The first clash between the national teams of the two countries took place at the Paris Olympics (Al-Naggar, 2012, p. 138). However, the Hungarian team, considered the probable winner, suffered a heavy three-goal defeat and already in the second round said goodbye to the struggles of the Olympic Games. The result shocked the public. The fact that the event entered Hungarian sports and football history under the name "Egyptian Plague" is a good indication of this (Nagy, 1981, p. 59).

The 1930s brought success and glory to football in both countries. This is one of the golden ages in the history of Hungarian football, the clear culmination of which is the 1938 World Cup finalist appearance. And Egypt became the first Arab African team to play in a World Cup in 1934. In this tournament, the two teams met for the third time (after a match in Cairo in 1932). At the meeting that took place on 27 May, the Hungarian side triumphed this time, with 4:2 (Kopácsi, 2000, p. 28). After outlining the early antecedents, let's move on to the period after the Second World War, which brought about serious changes in the history of both countries. In terms of the development of football relations, we should definitely highlight the year 1953. The Hungarian national football team, at Wembley Stadium in London, "in the match of the century", won 6:3 over the English team on November 25, 1953. Of course, the triumph of the world could not remain without echoes in Egypt. The defeat of the

British in football had symbolic significance and coincided with the political changes taking place in the country. The 1952 uprising, led by the Free Officers' Movement, swept away the monarchy, and then the republic was proclaimed on June 18, 1953. In this historical situation, the defeat of the "imperialists" in sport naturally aroused sympathy among the Egyptians Hungary and Hungarian football (J. Nagy, 2017, p. 24). The results of the Golden Team (Olympic victory in 1952) were, of course, authoritative in themselves.

It was a special honor for the Arab country that the English-beating Hungarian national team visited Egypt in the last days of January 1954 (Népsport, 1954). In preparation for the World Cup, the Golden Team played five preparation matches during February in the country. The Hungarian national team also played in Cairo and Alexandria; they played against the Miszr Bank national team, then against the district national team of Cairo (Feb. 1, Feb. 5), followed by the match against the Egyptian national team (Feb. 12), then the Hungarian team also competed against alexandria's national team (Feb. 14), and finally ended its tour with an appearance against the Egyptian league selection (Feb. 21). The "raid" for the purpose of preparing for the World Cup was a success, as the national team left it as the winner at the end of all the matches (Nagy, 1981, pp. 202–204). It was also on the occasion of this guest appearance when Nándor Hidegkuti also visited Egypt for the first time, who dazzled the audience with his play and goals and established his reputation among Egyptian football fans.

Sports and Football Relations 1956–1967

After the Golden Team tour, Egyptian-Hungarian football and sports relations developed dynamically in the following years, as evidenced, among other things, by the tours of Hungarian club teams in Egypt. In January 1956, for example, Budapest Honvéd hosted Africa, where he played preparation matches, including with the Egyptian national football team (MTI Sportkiadás, 1956a). In the same year, on 30 December 1956, the Győri ETO football team also started its Egyptian "raid" (MTI Sportkiadás, 1956c). In this case, however, the Hungarian team's appearance abroad did not only serve to build sports relations. The ETO, as the football team of the Hungarian Wagon and Machine Factory, was invited to the country by the general manager of the Egyptian State Railways. For this reason, the purpose of the visit was also to expand and deepen the existing trade relations between the two countries.[3]

In 1956, a major sporting diplomacy event was the visit of the Egyptian sports delegation to the Hungarian capital on August 17 (MTI Sportkiadás, 1956b). The body, consisting of prominent personalities, arrived in Budapest at the invitation of the National Committee on Physical Education and Sports. Its members include the

[3] The North African country was already a significant market for Hungarian mechanical engineering products (e.g. railway cars).

President and Secretary-General of the Egyptian Olympic Committee and the Secretary-General of the Egyptian University Sports Federation. During their stay here for a few days, they studied the organizational structure of Hungarian sport, as well as the sports facilities (primarily the Népstadion). On the Egyptian side, the need to invite Hungarian football teams as a possible means of expanding sports relations was highlighted. The MTI press release also reported that former national team footballer Pál Titkos (1908–1988) said yes to the invitation of the Egyptian Football Federation and thus could begin his coaching career in the country. The coaching appointments of the 1950s marked the opening and first wave of Hungarian football professionals' involvement in Egypt. In fact, the activities of Nándor Hidegkuti or Ferenc Puskás in the 1970s also fit into this line. In any case, Hungarian professionals were present in very large numbers on the African continent during this period and did a lot for the development of football on the continent. (Dénes and Rochy, 1999, p. 72).

Pál Titkos was first the head coach of the Egyptian national team, and then he was entrusted with an equally serious task when he became the coach of the Al-Ahly team (Al-Naggar, 2013, p. 77). He held this post until 1959. However, he was preceded by Vilmos Kertész II (1890–1964), who worked in Alexandria, and Géza Toldi (1909–1985), a former footballer of the Ferencvárosi Torna Club[4] who coached Cairo's second most important club, Zamalek. In addition to Titkos and Toldi, Ferenc Magyar (1910–1977) also worked in the United Arab Republic[5] in 1957, and from 1958 Pál Szabó (1903–1986) and Gyula Lázár (1911–1983) also worked in the United Arab Republic (Szűcs, 1958, p. 6). Szabó and Lázár had to act in their capacity as national coaches and taught at the football department of the College of Physical Education[6] (Szűcs, 1959, p. 6). The former's most important task is to organize coach training; conducting three- and six-month training courses at beginner and advanced levels, while the latter's role was similarly responsible, he had to deal with the management of youth education. These five individuals are therefore the first generation of Hungarian coaches in Egypt. It is no exaggeration to say that they were the think tanks of Egyptian football, the most eminent specialists of this era.

In the 1960s, another "Hungarian contingent" arrived in the North African country. The names of Sándor Kapocsi (1919–1980), László Rákóczi (1926–2016) and József Kovács II (1923–2001) were the hallmarks of this second generation (Németh, 1964, p. 13). All three were promoted to the first-class teams of the Egyptian football league as managers. Kapocsi coached at Seka Hadid in Cairo, Rákóczi at Suez Canal in Ismaila, while Kovacs II also coached at an Ismaila club (Szűcs, 1965, p. 12). Meanwhile, the tradition of guest appearances by Hungarian clubs continued. The teams of Honvéd, Ferencvárosi Torna Club and Győri ETO also visited Egypt in the 1960s. We can agree

[4] The most well-known and successful football club in Hungary.
[5] The union of Egypt and Syria from 1958.
[6] In Hungarian: Testnevelési Főiskola, today's Hungarian University of Sports Science [in Hungarian: Magyar Testnevelési és Sporttudományi Egyetem).

with the author of the magazine *Labdarúgás*, who said at the end of the article: "In the land of the pyramids, Hungarian football really has authority." However, fruitful relations and the development of Egyptian football were temporarily halted by the unexpected war conflict of 1967.

Consequences of the 1967–73 War Period for Egyptian Football

On June 5, 1967, another Arab-Israeli armed conflict began with a surprise attack by the Israeli Air Force (J. Nagy-Al Naggar, 2019, p. 129). The six-day lightning war ended in a complete victory for the attacking party and, as a result, important areas such as the Gaza Strip, Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank came under Israeli control. The Arab League states did not accept the situation and demanded the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories. This marked the beginning of the period of the so-called "maddening war", which lasted about three years. Egypt, meanwhile, wanted to liberate the occupied parts by its own forces, so on March 8, 1969, it launched intensive artillery and airstrikes, as well as commando raids in the Suez Canal area. The fighting dragged on until August 7, 1970, when a ceasefire agreement was reached between the Egyptian and Israeli sides. The difficult political situation in Egypt and the acts of war have, of course, had an impact on the sporting scene, and in particular on football. For four years starting in June 1967, virtually all types of sports activities were discontinued on the territory of the country. The championship was suspended, and the fights did not resume over the next four years. The clubs lost their players, who had to enlist in the army and take part in the fighting. In addition to them, many representatives of the great Egyptian football generation of the 1960s, such as Tarek[7] and Saleh Salim[8], or Taha Ismail[9], retired.

When life finally returned to normal, on October 29, 1971, it seemed that the football season would also start as usual. However, this initiative has proven to be a life-changing one. After only two months, at the end of December, the championship was interrupted again (Magyar Hírlap, 1971, p. 371.). In fact, in the Cairo derby, a clash between the teams of Al-Ahli and Zamalek, disorder broke out after the referee awarded a controversial penalty in favor of the Zamalek team. Supporters clashed with law enforcement, resulting in many being injured. At the same time, similar scenes played out in Mehalla, so the Egyptian Football Federation decided to suspend the league indefinitely.

The following season, 1972–73, had already been conducted and completed in a normal framework, but the 1973–74 football season was again interrupted by a war conflict. Between 6 and 26 October 1973, the fourth Arab-Israeli armed conflict, the so-

[7] Tarek Salim (1937–2016): Striker for Al Ahly and the Egyptian national team.
[8] Saleh Salim (1930–2002): The best-known player for Al-Ahly's club, where he spent almost his entire career. He later served as president of the club on two occasions (1980–1988, 1992–2002).
[9] Taha Ismail (1939-): Legendary attacker for the Al-Ahly team from 1957 to 1970.

called Yom-Kippur War, took place. On the first day of the war, Egyptian troops successfully pushed forward in the Suez Canal area. (This day later became a national holiday in the North African country.) In addition to acts of war, the oil crisis, which began on October 17, 1973, also hit the countries. After the initial successes, the war ended in Israeli victory. Of the Arab countries, Egypt was the only one committed to launching peace talks with Israel. The next period of calmness meant that the sporting life, and thus the football league, could resume.

The Development of Hungarian-Egyptian Sports and Football Relations in the 1970s

The outbreak of the Yom-Kippur War temporarily hampered sports diplomacy between the two countries again. However, the following year, the first step towards a fresh start was taken, when the ministries of education agreed on the mutual visit of different university and college teams in Egypt and Hungary. This is how the Egypt university football team played in Hungary between 20 and 30 June 1974 (Napló, 1975). This was followed by a tour of Egypt by the MAFC (Műegyetemi és Atlétikai Football Club)[10] basketball team in the autumn of 1974 (MNL OL. 01), and in December 1974 a decision was made to visit the Hungarian university football team the following year, in February. However, these relations, as we can see, did not yet concern top-flight sports clubs, but college, university associations. The university team was finally able to visit the North African country on February 8. It was also planned to play a match with Hidegkuti's team, Al-Ahli, where the legendary coach would have taken the kick-off, but this idea ultimately failed.

Examining the documents of diplomatic relations between the United Arab Republic and Hungary, it can be noted that the possibility of developing sports relations was first discussed again in January 1975. Hungary's embassy in Cairo indicated the Egyptian side's desire to expand relations, they wanted to go beyond the framework of cooperation organized solely by educational institutions. The top organ of Hungarian sport, OTSH (Országos Testnevelési és Sporthivatal)[11], has shown itself ready to take steps to this end and has indicated this to the Hungarian Embassy in Cairo. At first, the idea of sending delegations of 2-3 people and mutual visits arose (MNL OL. 02). The head of the International Department of OTSH wanted to travel to Cairo to prepare for negotiations (MNL OL. 03). However, after an encouraging start, the stagnation and regression of Hungarian-Egyptian foreign relations began in the following years. This was due to the foreign policy of President Anwar Sadat, who dissolved the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship in 1976 and caused great outrage in the Arab world when he also visited Israel on November 19, 1977. These steps have led to a deterioration in

[10] In English: Technical University and Athletics Football Club.
[11] In English: National Office of Physical Education and Sports.

relations with the countries of the Eastern Bloc. Of course, this was also true for Hungary, which also had an impact on the development of sports relations between the two countries.

In March 1978, the president of Ismaila SC was looking for a coach to head the city's football team, so he turned to his ambassador in Hungary Cairo for help (MNL OL. 04). The esteem of the Hungarian coaches is well illustrated by the fact that the sports director specifically wanted to see Hungarian professionals on the bench. Ambassador Lajos S. Nagy forwarded the request to OTSH and the MLSZ (Magyar Labdarúgó Szövetség)[12] and asked the competent authorities for a resolution as soon as possible. The answer soon came, but it was dismissive. This is because the federation decided not to recommend sending a Hungarian coach to the Arab country. However, the Hungarian ambassador tried to get MLSZ and OTSH to amend their decision. He was aware that Egyptian-Hungarian relations were deteriorating in many areas, but Hungarian football and Hungarian professionals, including Nándor Hidegkuti, asked for the decision to be reconsidered, citing his reputation (MNL OL. 05). At that time, it even seemed that Hidegkuti would not stay in Egypt any longer. In the end, another Hungarian coach was not sent off, although at that time even Nándor Hidegkuti did not return home from Cairo.

However, not only negative trends have appeared in sports relations. From the summer of 1978, the Egyptian Football Federation, through the Embassy of Egypt in Budapest, indicated to the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the sports authorities its desire to install a Hungarian-born head coach into the bench of the Egypt national football team (MNL OL. 06).

In the request, the person selected, the outgoing head coach of the Hungarian national team, Lajos Baróti (1914–2005), was specifically named. In addition, the Egyptian side wanted to play two friendly matches with the Hungarian national football team in 1979, one of which would have been held in Budapest and one in Cairo. In this case, too, the resolution of OTSH and MLSZ was negative regarding the posting of Baróti, although their decision was justified this time (MNL OL. 07). Lajos Baróti's services were still claimed in the management of domestic football, despite the fact that his retirement was underway. In addition, the person concerned himself stated that he did not wish to accept the invitation (MNL OL. 08). However, the organization of national team matches, meanwhile, progressed well and ended up with an alternative solution, they managed to send a Hungarian coach to the Egyptian national team as well. The new candidate of the Egyptian side was Dezső Bundzsák (1928–2010) (MNL OL. 09). This request has already been positively assessed by OTSH, MLSZ and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so from the following year Bundzsák was able to start his work as coach of the Egyptian national eleven (MNL OL. 10). The variability of sporting relations is well indicated by the fact that also in the autumn of 1978, the visit of the

[12] In Egnlish: Hungarian Football Association.

Cairo Arsenal team to Hungary was also thwarted due to the negative response of the Hungarian side (MNL OL. 11). Although in this case the justification was acceptable, since by that time the season was already in full swing, and none of the Hungarian clubs could have played matches with the Egyptians.

The following year again produced mixed results in sports diplomacy. The initiator was again the Egyptian side. At the beginning of 1979, the Egyptian Football Federation wanted to host the Hungarian Olympic football team from February 15 to 25 (MNL OL. 12). This time there was a positive response from MLSZ, and it was considered possible to go out and play two or three matches. However, there have been a series of negative responses to guest appearances by Egyptian club teams, such as Mansour Sport Club (MNL OL. 13) and Zamalek (MNL OL. 14). The latter club wanted to establish closer cooperation with Spartacus from Békéscsaba, without success.

With two resolutions, I would like to illustrate the dismissive attitude of the Hungarian side; one is dated May 7, while the other is dated July 16. The former document states: "Due to Egypt's foreign policy course, which is currently unfavorable to us, we, for our part, do not encourage the development of Hungarian-Egyptian sports relations" (MNL OL. 15). And the July one: "[...] in the current circumstances, it is not in our political interest to organize spectacular sporting events with Egypt." (MNL OL. 16).

During 1979, it is worth remembering in more detail a sensitive matter. The Videoton football team[13] hosted Cairo in January 1979, where they also played a friendly match with Hidegkuti's team, Al-Ahly. However, the departure of the football team was not of paramount importance in terms of sports diplomacy, as the presence of footballers was important for Videoton for business policy reasons. This is because the company negotiated with Egyptian companies to assemble and sell TV sets (MNL OL. 17). According to the agreement reached between the teams of Videoton and National, the Hungarian side would also have hosted Hidegkuti's team in Hungary during the year. The designated date for arrival was September 18. However, this invitation was withdrawn by the Hungarian club after learning of the MLSZ's position on the matter (MNL OL. 18). The football association has instructed the clubs that they can no longer play friendly matches or receive guests after the start of the domestic league. However, the National's management has argued that there is a valid contract between the two clubs and that they will firmly insist on visiting Hungary and matches. They took this position until the day before the trip (September 17), but in the end they accepted the decision of the MLSZ at the last minute and so after their arrival on September 18, their program included only trainings, tourist programs and rest (MNL OL. 19).

[13] Videoton was a company in Székesfehérvár that manufactured electrical equipment. The name of the city's professional sports club originates from here.

Another significant event of the year was the preparation of a wide-ranging Hungarian-Egyptian work plan for cooperation in the field of sports, also at the initiative of the Egyptian side. The four-page document contained very detailed and concrete proposals. Thus, for example, he touched on the exchange of sports teams, the issue of hiring coaches, professional contacts between sports institutions, cooperation in the production of sporting goods, training of sports leaders and even joint research into sport (MNL OL. 20). However, the response from OTSH and the State Department was dismissive. The signing of the Protocol on Sports Cooperation was not considered timely, as "at present it would not be appropriate to develop sports relations spectacularly" (MNL OL. 21).

A real sensation for Egyptian fans was the arrival of Ferenc Puskás in the country, which also dates back to the summer of 1979. The former Golden Team standout moved from AEK Athens, Greece, to Port Said, where he became the coach of the Al-Masry team (Dénes and Jamrich, 1998, p. 261). At that time, he was no longer unfamiliar with the Arab world, having been the head coach of Saudi Arabia's national team from 1976 to 1977. His activity in Egypt eventually became very long, as he managed Al-Masry as head coach for five years, until 1984 (Prantner and Al-Naggar, 2022, pp. 101–103). Nándor Hidegkuti, his former teammate and friend, who was still in Cairo in 1979, met on numerous occasions and had private conversations or discussed professional issues.

Nándor Hidegkuti's Coaching Career

At the time of his contract to Egypt, Nándor Hidegkuti already had more than a decade of head coaching experience. He ended his active football career in 1958 when, after eleven years at MTK (Magyar Testgyakorlók Köre)[14], he nailed the stoplist. After that, almost immediately began his coaching career. He said goodbye to MTK after a year and tried his luck abroad from 1960 onwards. Between 1960 and 1963 he worked in Italy for Fiorentina and Mantua (Zsolt Róbert, 1979, p. 133). With the former club, he successfully played on both the domestic and European stage, as under his leadership they won both the Italian Cup and the European Cup Winners' Cup. After his involvement in Italy, he returned home and served as head coach of Hungarian club teams. In Hungary, he travelled the routes Győri ETO[15] (1963-65), Tatabánya (1966), MTK (1967-68), Budapest Spartacus (1968-71), Eger (1973), interspersed with a short detour to Poland in Rzeszów (1972-73). He achieved his greatest success with Győr when they won the Hungarian championship. This was a special event because the country team after Nagyvárad AC managed to win the championship (Hidegkuti and Fekete, 1965, p. 219).

[14] MTK is a sports club based in Budapest. The club played a decisive role in Hungarian football in the 20th century.
[15] Győri ETO is the team of the machine factory in Győr, founded in 1904.

However, the perception of Nándor Hidegkuti's time at Hungarian clubs and in Poland is not positive overall. There are several articles in the contemporary press in which it is written that he has been "persecuted by bad luck" (Új Ifjúság, 1974) practically since his time in Győr and that he is not able to perform as successfully as one would expect. In January 1967, he returned to the scene of his previous successes, MTK - now as head coach - where, however, he had to fight against relegation from NB1[16] with the long-standing capital team. The club was in a very bad period after a successful European Cup Winner's Cup appearance in 1964 and it would have been necessary for someone to lead them out of this difficult period by doing the right professional work. Nándor Hidegkuti's appointment as coach seemed to be the perfect choice, as he knew the team and its traditions well. However, the championship season did not go as planned. The legendary player of the Golden Team has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the footballers. In July, for example, he promised harsh penalties for offenses committed in private life, poor performance on the field, and tactical indiscipline (Népsport, 1967). To no avail. MTK finished in tenth place. After a disappointing league appearance, Hidegkuti gave an interview to the newspaper *Labdarúgás* in December 1967, in which he again made very critical statements about their players. He questioned their talent, was dissatisfied with their attitude, diligence and dedication to the club. He summed up what to do in a short but tough sentence: "We need a new, different team!" (Németh, 1967, p. 5).

However, he could no longer carry out this task, as the club terminated his contract by mutual consent shortly afterwards, in the middle of the 1968 season. (Magyar Nemzet, 1968). Yet he was not held responsible for the poor performance in the sports press either. According to some news sources, the club's unsettled internal affairs and the interference of influential personalities from various interest groups in football professional issues also made the head coach's job difficult (Nemzeti Sport, 2018). A brief account of his failed crisis management attempt of one and a half years at MTK is also necessary because this situation is comparable to his involvement in Egypt five years later, when he had to settle the affairs of a club in a similarly difficult situation, albeit in other respects. Later, in an interview in Cairo, he recalled with a bitter taste in his mouth a year and a half spent with his former team (Fejér Megyei Hírlap, 1980) and more than a decade later he still resented the way he was treated at his beloved club.

Of course, the picture can be nuanced, as Nándor Hidegkuti has also achieved minor partial successes at this stage of his coaching career. Such was the case, for example, with his assignment immediately preceding the "Egyptian adventure" in Eger, where the band, under his leadership, successfully avoided relegation from the NB1/B league[17] in the 1973 season (Vas Népe, 1973). On the whole, however, it can be stated that the saying "No one can be a prophet in his own country" is also true in his case,

[16] NB1: National Championship, the top flight of Hungarian football league system.
[17] NB1/B: The second division of the Hungarian football league system.

which was often quoted by the contemporary press in connection with his domestic career (Magyar Nemzet, 1973).

Egyptian Appointment and First Year at Al-Ahly

After the season at Eger, it seemed that Nándor Hidegkuti's coaching career might even come to an end. In the summer of 1973, he did not take another job as a specialist manager but took a position in the hospitality industry in search of new challenges. The director of the South Pest Catering Company employed him in the "6:3 wine bar" that opened at that time on Szamuely Street in District IX (Hétfői Hírek, 1973a). In the interview at that time, he expressed disappointment about his time at MTK and could not answer a question about his further career as a specialist manager to the *Hétfői Hírek* reporter. Several big-name foreign clubs were mentioned by the former world-class footballer, from which he received an offer. Offers from Argentina's River Plate, Benfica and even Juventus have been floated, but he has not yet spoken about a possible Egyptian request that came in the coming weeks.

In September 1973 – just a month before the start of the Yom Kippur War – the most well-known club team in the Arab world, Cairo-based Al-Ahly[18] – or commonly known in international club football as – the National[19] signed and seated the legendary footballer of the Golden Team on the bench, offering a salary of less than six hundred dollars a month (Hétfői Hírek, 1973b). When the Hungarian professional took over his coaching assignment, the whole country was just past a period of war, so chaotic conditions prevailed in sports life as well. This was also true for the Al-Ahly football club. In 1967, the board of directors, led by Dr. Ibrahim Kamel Al-Wakeel, announced that military training would be prescribed for members of the club, who would have to volunteer in the popular resistance, as well as fundraising began on behalf of the club in favor of the war effort. As a result of the turbulent conditions that developed in the sports scene, Egyptian football suffered serious losses. However, it was necessary to rebuild not only the football life of the country after 1973, but also the Al-Ahly team. The beginning of the crisis at the club dates back to the period before the war years. They won their last league title in the 1961–62 season. It was from this low point that a specialist had to bring back the "Red Castle" and bring glory to them again. At Al-Ahly, therefore, a systematic construction began, in the framework of which the goal was to cultivate a completely new generation. A number of young people (who, by the way, were university and college students) were incorporated into the adult team. Later, these

[18] The club was founded in 1907 by members of the Cairo Student Union. In 1911, his football team was created. Al- Ahly is a 42-time champion, 37-time cup winner and 12-time cup winner in Egypt. The most successful and well-known team on the African continent.
[19] In the paper, I use both names, simultaneously.

players became famous under the name "El Talamza", that is, students. The creator of this new concept was Saleh Salim (Assem, 2016).

It was only a question of who would direct the professional work at the largest Egyptian club. His presidency, in particular General and President Abdel-Mohsen Kamel Murtagy (1916–2013) and the aforementioned Saleh Salim, who was now a sports leader, chose Nándor Hidegkuti, who inherited this difficult situation and had to start construction from there in the autumn of 1973. The arrival of the legendary football player was a real sensation in the Egyptian capital. Football fans still remembered well the golden team's guest appearance nearly twenty years ago and Hidegkuti's brilliance. At his presentation, a huge crowd gathered and enthusiastic spectators demanded that he show something of his football skills and talents (Hétfői Hírek, 1973c). In the following weeks, the working weekdays began. By this time, clubs had already passed the preparation period and the season had begun. For now, Hidegkuti made himself familiar with his new place and observing the players of his new team. His assistants and second coaches were former club luminaries Mahmoud Al-Gohary[20] and Fouad Shaban. With a rejuvenated squad, the club achieved excellent results in a short time, and after a few rounds it was already the league leader in the autumn of 1973. The 1973–74 football season had however barely begun, matches already had to be stopped in early October due to the outbreak of war. This time, however, the clubs have not been left without a competition this season. Instead of the usual league matches, the so-called "October League"[21] was held with the participation of the eighteen best Egyptian football teams.

The struggles of the special competition began on March 15, 1974. The organization was further complicated by the fact that the 1974 African Cup of Nations was held in Egypt from 1 to 14 March, where eight African national teams competed. Egypt won the bronze match over Congo and thus finished in third place. Immediately after that, the Egyptian championship, which was held in unusual conditions, started. However, the winner was not Hidegkuti's team, but the great rival Zamalek, which, incidentally, also had a European coach in the person of Czechoslovakian Ján Hucko (1932–2020). Although Al-Ahly did not even reach the final four, nevertheless, their record was not negative: in addition to 4 wins, they played 2 draws and suffered 2 defeats. However, critical and worried opinions still appeared in the Hungarian press, who believed that Hidegkuti would not be very successful in this new environment either.

In the summer of 1974, Nándor Hidegkuti returned home from Egypt for the first time to spend his holidays on Hungarian soil. At this time, an interview was

[20] Mahmoud Al-Gohary (1938–2012): Played for Al-Ahly in the 1950s and later became the club's head coach. He was the head coach of the Egypt national football team on two occasions. He won the Africa Cup of Nations as both a player and a coach.

[21] The name of the cup series has a symbolic meaning, which referred to the Yom-Kippur war in the autumn of the previous year.

conducted with him, in which he was asked about the experiences of the first year and his life outside in general by Tibor Hámori, a reporter of *Népsport* (Népsport, 1974). Reading the interview, as well as the additional commentary, we can note the contradiction that, unlike those published in *Új Ifjúság*, *Népsport* evaluated and presented fully positively Hidegkuti's first year in Egypt. According to this, in the period after the shutdown of the first-class football league in October 1973, Al-Ahly only trained, played various friendly matches and travelled on a tour of Africa. There is no reference to the struggles of the "October League", which began in March 1974, in the interview or in the supplementary texts. There is only one short sentence that refers to the team's performance: "They did not lose anywhere." However, this is an erroneous statement, since, for example, in the course of the League struggles, the Al-Ahly team was defeated on two occasions.

In the interview, Hidegkuti also talks about how big football fever there is in Egypt. His team's matches are watched by seventy to eighty thousand people, so they should be held in the central stadium in Cairo. However, fanatical Al-Ahly fans not only watch the adult team's competitive matches, but also encourage the second team and even watch training sessions. The Hungarian coach was already learning Arabic at that time, so he did not have any difficulties in communicating with his players. His popularity continued to be unbroken among Egyptians who loved football; many addressed him on the street and recalled his performance in the Golden Team's 1954 guest appearance in Egypt. Nándor Hidegkuti made serious tactical changes to the team already in the first year. It is also mentioned in the article that he introduced the formation of 4-3-3 in order to strengthen the defense. He found the members of the backline too low, against whom it is easy for opposing attackers to win a head duel. However, with the new line-up, he believed that an extra man would be able to help the defence by stepping back from midfield.

Despite the mixed results of the first season, the club had already indicated to him that they would like to extend his contract, which had bound him to Al-Ahly until 1 August 1974. From the interview conducted by *Népsport*, we learn that in the summer he had requests from other countries, such as Panathinaikos of Greece, where he would have replaced his former national teammate Ferenc Puskás on the bench. However, he chose to stay in Egypt for another year.

Honours and Professional Work

The former legendary player of the Golden Team returned to his club during the summer in the hope that the 1974–75 football season in Egypt could go smoothly as usual, and thus he himself could carry out his professional work in calm conditions. This expectation came true and for the first time in many years, club teams were able to play their matches in the Egyptian football league, which lasted from 6 September 1974 to 6

April 1975. It was the nineteenth season since the series was founded in 1948 to run its entirety.

In February 1975, the Hungarian national football team visited Egypt in the spirit of rebuilding sports relations between the two countries. On this occasion, the Hungarian Scientific and Cultural Center in Cairo organized a reception for the team, where Nándor Hidegkuti was also invited as a star guest. The reporter of *Népsport*, Katalin Ruszkai, was present at the event and interviewed the Hungarian coach, with the help of which we can reconstruct the events, the most important events of the 1974–75 season and the professional work at the club (Népsport, 1975b). In February, they have not yet suffered a single defeat and were in first place in the table. It seemed that the unsuccessful period since 1962 would finally come to an end in the club's history and they could celebrate a league title. The long-unseen successes created a euphoric atmosphere among National supporters. Nándor Hidegkuti said in the interview: "If my team wins, a real people's celebration will begin." The streets of the capital are flooded with crowds of enthusiastic fans – even hundreds of thousands – and everything is covered in red according to the club's colour. The team continued to play its matches in the Nasser stadium, which could accommodate one hundred and twenty thousand people. We also get some information about his players, whom he considered technical, but also saw their weaknesses. Of these, he highlighted two main problems; their indiscipline and lack of fitness. However, the Hungarian coach did a great professional job, the fruits of which seemed to ripen. He broke down their individualistic and selfish style, even by imposing punishments. For example, the team's most talented player, Mahmoud El Khatib[22], was banished to the stands after he once ran around the stadium to entertain spectators, holding the ball on his head. The fans continued to attend the training sessions in very large numbers, where they tried to put pressure on Nándor Hidegkuti so that they did not have to watch the exercises, but there was a real game (tasima) going on there as well. However, he did not shy away from the fanatics and ordered them to order. Two "technical terms" were introduced in connection with the quality of the game: ragel and laibe. The former term means man and he applied it when he was not satisfied with the game shown (they won in vain), while in the latter case, using the word players, he praised them.

Two months later, in early April, Al-Ahly was able to really celebrate a championship title. In thirty-four games, twenty-six wins, seven draws and only one defeat were the team's record (Said, 2007a). In terms of both offense and defensive work, the National was the best guard in the league, as they had the best goal ratio (11 conceded on 70 goals scored), so there was no doubt that they deservedly conquered

[22] Mahmoud El Khatib (1954 –): He spent his entire active football career with Al-Ahly. He has celebrated numerous league titles and cup victories with his club. He reached the pinnacle of his career in the 1980s. In 1983, he was voted the best player on the African continent. In 1986, he won the Africa Cup of Nations with the Egyptian national team. He had a special relationship with Nándor Hidegkuti. The Hungarian sports press describes this as a relationship between master and apprentice (Népsport, 1984).

the trophy. The Hungarian sports press reported these results in detail only in February 1976, when Zoltán Gyulay published a lengthy article about Nándor Hidegkuti's coaching activities in Egypt in the columns of *Magyar Nemzet* (Magyar Nemzet, 1976). The article contains some inaccurate comments, such as Al-Ahly winning the league again not after eighteen, but only after a thirteen-year hiatus, and the number of goals conceded in the 1974-75 season was not 8, but 11. However, as a relevant, new piece of information from the article, we can learn that the only defeat was suffered by the Port Said team by the Hidegkuti's, and that match featured the youth team.

However, the performance in the 1975–76 season perhaps even surpassed the success of the previous year. In February 1976, after playing fifteen matches, with 42 goals scored and only two conceded, Al-Ahli was at the top of the table. The conduct of the Egyptian Premier League struggles has changed again this year, by the way. The twenty-four first-class teams were divided into two groups of twelve, and at the end of the season, the winners of the two groups could play each other for the title. The most significant achievement for "Ferencváros of Cairo"[23] during the struggles was the ability to triumph at home to Ismaila, unprecedented in Egyptian football history. However, after the 1:0 victory, critical voices appeared in the sports press. The announcer of Egyptian radio, who happened to be the father of one of Hidegkuti's players, criticized the tactics of the Hungarian coach. He also had little regard for the number of goals scored and the number of counterattacks led by National, which (in his opinion) stemmed from a game that was too defensive. However, the team's success and successes spoke in favor of Hidegkuti, so he continued to enjoy the confidence of the club's management.

The core of the squad continued to be young players who, in addition to their sports activities, were studying at a college or university. The club supported them financially, and in addition to their daily allowance and post-match bonuses, they were also provided with a monthly stipend of twenty-five pounds. Footballers who broke the rules and were reticent could expect a fine from their strict coach, "Churchill". With the help of Zoltán Gyulay's account, we can also track the development of the team from a tactical point of view. According to this, fitness problems no longer appeared in the footballers, as well as they managed to master the previously mentioned 4-3-3 formation. The importance of the former is well illustrated by the fact that Al-Ahly was able to dominate the game especially in the second half of the games, when the less prepared teams were already tired. At the end of his writing, the author of the article praises the work of the Hungarian coach, as he has once again made Egypt's most popular club a big team, and then he also sums up with the well-known phrase why he could not be really successful in domestic football: "In vain, no one is a prophet in his own country".

[23] The term refers to the fact that Al-Ahly's success is comparable to that of Hungarian Ferencvaros.

An excellent league appearance in 1975–76 eventually resulted in a trophy again for Al-Ahli. As a group winner, in a back-and-forth system, he was able to play a final against the El Mahalla team. The two matches, which will take place on May 17 and May 21, were won by Hidegkuti's side with 1:0 and 4:0, respectively (Said, 2007b). After the conclusion of the domestic league, Al-Ahly was also able to participate in the African Champions Cup, but there the successes fell short. They said goodbye to the series already in the second round after losing to the team of eventual winners MC Alger of Algeria.

This time, Nándor Hidegkuti was asked about the events of the 1976–77 season by a journalist from the *Népsport* newspaper. Dezső Boross interviewed the coach of Al-Ahly in July 1977, when he was on holiday in Hungary (Népsport, 1977). At the end of the Egyptian football season, which ended a month earlier, the Hidegkuti's side were able to celebrate a league title again, in addition to putting the team of big rivals Zamalek behind them in the table. Once again, the club's scoreline was very impressive: in addition to twenty-three wins, only four draws and a single defeat stood by their name (Said, 2007c). It was only because of the unbearable heat that the Hungarian coach had reason to complain. The team's players have suffered a lot of injuries, so in some cases he has also sent reserve players on the field throughout the season. The Hungarian coach used this to explain the tighter final result. After all, his team was only five points ahead of the runners-up Zamalek. In the African Champions Cup, the quarter-finals were the final for the National this time. At the time, eventual finalists Hearts of Oak of Ghana defeated Hidegkuti's team, leaving the continental front without a resounding success. The Hungarian coach also operated with the introduction of tactical changes this football season. He tried to play total football with his team, a term in this case that refers to everyone doing their part in building attacks and defending as well. Adaptation to the new game philosophy was still underway, not all its elements worked perfectly. Hidegkuti was given a free hand in the head coach's job and the club's management accepted the methods that he continued to use to discipline the players. Anyone who questioned his decisions or dared to defy his will had to leave the team, or at least face a fine. At the end of the interview, the future of Hidegkuti was also discussed. He then revealed his further plans to complete his two-year contract with Al-Ahly and then return home.

The 1977–78 season ended with mixed results for the National team. The streak of championships was interrupted, as rivals Zamalek conquered the trophy. In a fierce fight to the extreme, Al-Ahly's team lost the race only because of their worse goal difference. The names of the two clubs had the same score in the table and the number of goals scored (41) was the same, however, Hidegkuti's side finished the season with eight goals conceded, while Zamalek capitulated only seven times in the Egyptian first-tier football league (Said, 2007d). However, this football season did not end fruitlessly for Al-Ahly either, as he took revenge on his opponent in the Egyptian Cup final (Amerikai-Kanadai Magyar Élet, 1978).

The Most Memorable Matches for Al-Ahly's Club from 1973 to 1980

By this time, Nándor Hidegkuti had been out in Cairo for almost five years and had enhanced the reputation of the Hungarian football industry. With three league titles and a cup win, he led Al-Ahly back to the top. From these years we can highlight three important and memorable matches, two of which took place against reputable clubs in international football.

In the spring of 1976, the West German Borussia Mönchengladbach[24] team visited Egypt. On April 5, the Al-Ahly team played a friendly match with them, where the final result was 2:2. The association, managed by head coach Udo Lattek, arrived in the African country as West German champions (Népsport, 1976).[25] More than a hundred thousand spectators were curious about the clash in Cairo, where Hidegkuti's men stood their ground decently and even achieved a result that could be said to be a feat.

A year later, on 20 December 1977, Bayern Munich hosted the Egyptian capital and played a friendly match with Al-Ahly. The Bavarian star team performed disappointingly in the current German league season and just parted ways with their coach Dettmar Cramer in early December, so they did not travel to Cairo in the best condition. The German specialist was replaced on the bench by Gyula Lóránt, the former excellence of the Golden Team, so a separate "Hungarian match" took place between him and Nándor Hidegkuti. The match against Al-Ahly was reported triumphantly by the best-known Egyptian newspaper, *Al Ahram*, on 21 December, as Hidegkuti's side defeated Bayern 2:1 in a huge surprise (Al Ahram, 1977). In the brief report we read that the Munich side could have suffered a more serious defeat if the goalkeeper had not come to their aid in several cases. To be fair, the Bavarians did not feature in their strongest line-up in the clash, although their best player, Gerd Müller, played and scored a goal. The coverage praises Hidegkuti's coaching qualities, primarily because of the personnel changes he made during the match. Interestingly, Nándor Hidegkuti, by the way, later mentioned a 3:2 final result in several interviews.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the most memorable match of Nándor Hidegkuti's seven years as coach in Egypt was the final of the 1978 Egyptian Cup series. The two Cairo gigas, Al-Ahly and Zamalek, clashed in the final. After the latter won the title in a fierce battle, as mentioned earlier, this must have been an excellent opportunity for Hidegkuti's side to fight back. However, the match did not go according to the planned scenario, as the Zamalek team took a two-goal lead and were within arm's reach of bagging this trophy in the 1977–78 season. However, then an unexpected turn of events occurred. Al-Ahly equalized first, then took the lead and finally defeated their

[24] In divided Germany, separate football leagues existed. In West Germany, the Bundesliga was established in 1963 as a unified national league system.
[25] In divided Germany, separate football leagues existed. In West Germany, the Bundesliga was established in 1963 as a unified national league system.

opponents with 4:2. This incredible resurrection and translation is also considered a unique achievement in the history of Egyptian football.

Ending His Career in Egypt

Nándor Hidegkuti managed Al-Ahli as head coach for two more seasons, until the summer of 1980. Although his contract would have expired as early as 1979, OTSH allowed him to extend his contract for another year. The last two years have brought new successes for the Hungarian coach and his team (MNL OL. 22).

In the winter of 1979, Hidegkuti traveled home for the holidays. A reporter from *Népújság* managed to interview the former legendary footballer, who also reported on the current situation around his team and the state of the league (Népújság, 1979). As expected, Al-Ahly were at the top of the table at the time and had a significant seven-point lead over second-placed El Mahalla. In addition, in the second half of the season, their draw was favorable, as they were able to host their biggest rivals on home soil. Hidegkuti proudly revealed that the Egyptian national team is also practically based on the players of his club, and up to twelve footballers will be called up from them to the national team's squad. Of them, the right winger Mustafa Abdul stands out, who is referred to in the sports press only as "Magari" (Hungarian) and his game is compared to the former excellence of the Golden Team. During January, the team Videoton visited Cairo and in order to to build Egyptian-Hungarian football relations competed in a friendly match with Al-Ahli (Magyar Nemzet, 1979). It also served as a kind of preparation for Hidegkuti's to continue. The winter foundation was excellent and the National, which had been promising in the league until then, was able to celebrate a championship again at the end of the season. In the season that ended in April 1979, they did not suffer a single defeat and brought the usual excellent performances in other indicators (most goals scored and fewest goals conceded) (Said, 2007e).

In the autumn of 1979, Hidegkuti began his seventh and final season at the helm of Al-Ahli (Hoffer, 1979). From the interview with him at that time, we learn that from the following year, if possible, he wanted to work for a Hungarian club, and then end his coaching career. At that point, however, he was still concentrating on his current duties in Egypt, where he would have been sentenced to life. This season (1979–80) could not pass without successes either, so Nándor Hidegkuti managed to win the championship trophy again with Al-Ahly as the final chord of his activity in Cairo (Said, 2007f).

During the season, Hungarian media managed to interview “Mr. Kuti” in Cairo on two occasions (Egyptian fans referred to Hidegkuti as such). As to January 1980, we have two sources on the further development of his career, as reporters have mostly questioned him about it. To sum up the Egyptian adventure, the only feeling left for

everyone, including Nándor Hidegkuti, was that he could not win the continental Champions Cup with Al-Ahly, so this trophy was missing from the club's collection (FEJÉR MEGYEI HÍRLAP, 06.01.1980). Hidegkuti claims that they have not participated in its struggles since 1975, as the dates of the matches often clashed with the dates of the university exams. However, this statement is not true in my opinion which is based on the well-documented history of the international series. As I implied in the previous chapter, Al-Ahly entered this contest in both 1976 and 1977, although his team did withdraw in 1978.

In an interview with *Népszabadság* at the end of January 1980, Hidegkuti confirmed his intention to leave, and although he talked about his next potential station (contacting an unnamed European club), he also mentioned the possibility of retiring (Népszabadság, 1980). Even in a report in early January, he hinted that although he had just reached the peak of his coaching career at the age of 58, he still felt it was time to leave and retire. Nándor Hidegkuti crowned his performance by winning another championship, and in the summer of 1980, he actually returned to Hungary, where he did not take another job as a professional manager (Képes Sport, 1980).

Return to Egypt

Hidegkuti's retirement period however lasted only three years when he became a master of the Shabab Al-Ahli team in the United Arab Emirates. So he returned to the Arab world and was active in Dubai for two years (1983–1985) (Képes Sport, 1985). Meanwhile, he was also able to talk to the sports press about his experiences in Cairo. In July 1985, the Hungarian national football team played a friendly match with Egypt. Prior to the meeting, Hidegkuti was asked to describe the opponent's playing power and generally outline the current situation in the country's football (Csongrád Megyei Hírlap, 1985). The Hungarian coach especially singled out his former player Khatim, whom he considered the most dangerous Egyptian striker.

In Cairo, meanwhile, they seriously thought that Nándor Hidegkuti would be kept with the National club for life. Over the decades, the possibility of his return has been raised almost year after year, but after his involvement in Dubai, he has already considered his coaching career to be effectively over. Nevertheless, the connection was not broken. In January 1993, he visited Egypt for ten days at the invitation of Al-Ahly, where he attended friendly meetings and was consulted in his capacity as an adviser (Nemzeti Sport, 1992). His visit, which began as an informal event, soon took on a formal framework. In February 1993, we can already read in the Hungarian sports press that he sat on the bench of Al-Ahli again in an “old boys’ match”. In addition, a more serious task would have been eagerly entrusted to him by the Egyptian Football Federation (Mai Nap, 1993). There were plans to take on a role as a consultant for his former club or for the Egypt national football team.

The return to Egypt was finally accomplished, but not at the expected location in Cairo, but in Alexandria, with the Al-Ittihad team (Kisalföld, 1997). Hidegkuti took a job at his new station partly out of necessity, as he and his wife were in financial difficulties. The now seventy-five-year-old professional acted as a consultant for the Egyptian club. His contract with the team lasted until the summer of 1997, which eventually proved to be his last job as a football manager (Nemzeti Sport, 1997).

Summary

In response to a journalist's question in 1997 (Kurír, 1997) Nándor Hidegkuti revealed that he was idolized as a demigod in Egypt. And indeed, this statement should not be considered an exaggeration. The name "Mr. Kuti" sounds familiar to every football-loving Egyptian. They will never forget the achievements and unique successes of his coaching work in the 1970s. This is especially true in the case of Al-Ahly's club, as it was him who built up and re-made the National as the best team in the country. He has produced outstanding players such as Mahmoud El Khatib, who is considered one of the best Egyptian footballers of all time and has been acting as sports director and president ever since, at Al-Ahly, as a matter of fact. In addition to this, we can also mention other virtues of Hidegkuti, such as the introduction of new systems of play, styles of play and training methods, with which he had a serious impact on football in the Arab country. He introduced daily training and warm-ups on the field instead of the locker room before matches. With his professional activities, he continued a tradition that began sometime after the Second World War, since Hungarian specialists and Hungarian know-how were present from the 1950s onwards. His status as a former legendary footballer and his career, of course, served as a good letter of recommendation for football fans. Thus, it is not surprising that the achievements of Nándor Hidegkuti's playing career and coaching career are known and recognized by the public in the country.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Burying the Hatchet but with the Handle Sticking Out The Egyptian-Turkish Rapprochement – and its Questions[1]

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Abstract:

Since 2013, the relations between the two biggest conventional military powers of the Middle East became very hostile. The Egyptian-Turkish tensions affected not just the bilateral dimension, but Libya, the Eastern Mediterranean, and other regions too. Moreover, in 2020, there were signs of possible direct military conflict between Ankara and Cairo.

This did not happen and the rapprochement slowly but steady developed: in 2022, the leaders of the two countries met with each other and shook hands. Yet before this paper was finalised, however, there were still plenty of questions hanging over a possible Egyptian–Turkish rapprochement. There is no doubt that normalisation has started between Ankara and Cairo in recent years, but its outcome remains uncertain.

In summary: this paper strives to present the recent history of Egyptian-Turkish relations since the outbreak of the so-called Arab Spring, the main points of the regional "cold war" between Ankara and Cairo, and in the end, the remaining pitfalls of rapprochement.

Keywords:
Egypt, East Mediterranean, Libya, Muslim Brotherhood, Turkey

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Introduction

"We said that a process can begin. A step has been taken here to start such a process, and we had the talks. It is my hope that we want to move the process that started with our ministers to a good point later, hopefully to the high-level meetings" – the words by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came as a big surprise in the country and the region alike when he personally greeted the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Qatar on November 20, 2022 (Al-Jazeera, 2022). During the opening ceremony of the World Cup in Doha, they sent a strong message because they not just welcomed each other with warm words but in front of Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Tani, and also shook hands. Although the meeting lasted only few minutes, it signalled willingness on behalf of both leaders to bridge the nine-year rift between Egypt and Turkey. The surprise of the handshake comes from the fact that in the past Erdoğan many times underlined that he would "never talk to someone like him", by which the Turkish Prime Minister was essentially referring to the Egyptian President. (Al-Jazeera, 2019).

The reason behind such former rejection is that in 2013 Ankara lost one of his important allies – the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood – in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and since then the Egyptian-Turkish tension grew year by year. The media and political leadership of both countries constantly berated each other, while their economic, geopolitical and military interests many times collided in the Mediterranean. Moreover, in 2020, quite a few regional and international media channels raised a question about a possible direct military confrontation – horribile dictu even a war – between Egypt and Turkey in Libya (Iddon, 2020; Hayna, 2020). This did not happen. On the contrary: since the end of 2020, there were more and more signs of a possible rapprochement. When this paper was written, however, a state of fully restored relations has not been achieved. Why has it not happened? For that matter, how did the Egyptian-Turkish "cold war" begin? What was Ankara's reaction to Egyptian events in 2013? Where have both countries indirectly clashed in MENA? How and why has the rapprochement started? What are the remaining challenges and obstacles which are slowing down the process?

The goal of this paper is to give answers to all questions. First of all, it was important to devote the entire first three sections to the recent history of Egyptian-Turkish relations. This was necessary because it is only through the more descriptive account of historical precedents that we may understand why Ankara reacted in such a hostile way to the post-2013 Egyptian regime – and *vice versa*. Also, the third section will concentrate on the "geopolitical aspects" of the Egyptian-Turkish "cold war", especially on Libya and the undersea gas fields in the East Mediterranean. The next two parts examine not just the rapprochement, but also try to highlight the different factors behind it. The final part of the study is intended to give an answer to the main hypothesis: can the reconciliation campaign lead back to fruitful Egyptian-Turkish

relations? Or, due the remaining differences, was the whole process doomed from the beginning?

"The Golden Years"

The so-called "Arab Spring" meant a *tabula rasa* in the turbulent Egyptian–Turkish history, which, in the past, was not free from devastating wars and great-power rivalries, either. When the protests were still ongoing in Egypt, the Turkish Prime Minister (from 2014 President) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan – first among the non-Arab leaders – called on Hosni Mubarak to step down (Éva, 2016). Because the Egyptian President did not resign and the possibility of a civil war still was growing day by day, Erdoğan even announced Ankara's willingness to join an international humanitarian intervention and offered assistance. Even when the revolution against Moammer Gadhafi started in neighbouring Libya, Turkey evacuated not just its own citizens, but the Egyptians too (Salaheldin, 2019).

After Mubarak left his office, Abdullah Gül became the first foreign head of state who met with the new Egyptian leadership, the Egyptian Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. In Autumn 2011, Erdoğan – with six ministers and approximately 200 businessmen – visited Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. The Turkish delegation received a warm welcome in every country. *"The freedom message spreading from Tahrir Square has become a light of hope for all the oppressed through Tripoli, Damascus, and Sanaa"* – the Turkish Prime Minister said to the audience at the Cairo Opera House (Karadeniz, Saleh, 2011). For Arab Islamists, Turkey became a model where the Turkish Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partis/AKP) could win many elections and ensure a rising standard of living. A week later Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu spoke about the "Axis of Democracy", which meant a forming alliance between Ankara and Cairo (Fouad, 2011).

After the 2012 Egyptian elections, the visions of Egyptian-Turkish cooperation started to come to life. The first democratic votes in the Arab country's history were won by Freedom and Justice (Ḥizb al-Ḥurriyyah wa-l-ʿAdālah/FJP), the local political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. The new President of Egypt, Mohamed Morsi, belonged to the greatest admirers of the AKP. He considered Erdoğan as a "mentor" and called Turkey a model to follow. During his trip in Turkey, Morsi was treated as a hero and spoke at the AKP political conference. Erdoğan repaid the visit in November 2012, when the Turkish Prime Minister made his second trip in year in post-Arab Spring Egypt. They signed 27 cooperation agreements in many fields, including the establishment of a high-level strategic council. The two countries' bilateral relations reached a historical peak. Turkey lent $2 billion to Egypt and bilateral trade jumped to $5 billion in two years. By 2013, more than two hundred Turkish companies operated in Egypt with more than $2billion total investment (Bradley, 2012).

Even on the political level, they shared various goals and had a joint interest in the MENA. The Egyptian leadership sought to oust the army from politics, just as the Turkish had done in the first years of the 21st century. Egypt – along with Turkey – began to support various Islamist organisations and militant groups across the region, especially in Libya and Syria. Ankara and Cairo worked closely together in achieving a ceasefire in Gaza in November 2012 (the Israeli operation *Pillar of Defence* was halted); meanwhile, Egypt started to downsize its relations with Israel. Moreover, they started to cooperate with Iran too: the leaders of the three countries met in early 2013 in Cairo at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) summit and earmarked the new dawn of "Islamic Democracies" in the MENA.

"The End of the Honeymoon"

In June 2013, the *Tamarod* (rebellion) movement organised an anti-government campaign in Egypt. The growing economic and social problems, Cairo's foreign policy towards Iran, Turkey and growing involvement in Syria and Libya, the new "Islamic Constitution" and policy – these things all led to new countrywide protests. In the end, the Egyptian military under the command of then-Minister of Defence Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi toppled President Morsi, arrested the members of the government and the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood while waging bloody warfare in the streets on FJP-supporters. Most of the MENA-countries, the United States, Russia, the European Union, and the United Nations remained silent and sooner or later they all recognised the new leadership.

But Turkey – and Qatar – was not among them, because both interpreted the Egyptian events as a coup d'état. Erdoğan described the clashes in August 2013 with the word "massacre" and demanded that those who are responsible for death of more than six hundred people must be brought to justice (Reuters Staff, 2013). Moreover, he called for international UN sanctions and interventions against Egypt. Following the Prime Minister's statement, Cairo gave the Turkish ambassador to Egypt 48 hours' time to leave the country. As a response, Ankara also declared the Egyptian ambassador a *persona non grata* – so diplomatic relations were downgraded to the level of *charge d'affaires* (BBC, 2013). All previous military cooperation and joint drills were suspended, and the Turks vetoed any participation by Egypt in NATO's partnerships. The fall of Morsi meant for Erdoğan not only a loss of his main allies in MENA, but *"also watching his own model of government, the Islamic democracy on which the West had poured such flattery only two years earlier, being dismantled and discredited"* (Smith, 2019).

After Fattah al-Sisi won the election and became Egypt's new president in 2014, the relations turned much more hostile. The new Egyptian leadership banned the Brotherhood, froze its assets, jailed many of its members – for example Morsi himself – and started a regionwide propaganda war against their supporters. Meanwhile, Turkey

– with Great Britain and Qatar – became a safe haven for the Egyptian emigrants. They established the Egyptian Revolutionary Council in Istanbul as an anti-regime platform and the city hosted two conferences of the "global" Brotherhood (Altunişik, 2019). Turkey not only welcomed the escaped activists, MB-members and government officials, but gave them the opportunity to openly criticise the Egyptian regime in television and in the social media too. But when it came to the propaganda-war and "diplomatic retaliations", Egypt did not lag behind either. The Arab country's press regularly attacked Erdoğan, the AKP's rule, Turkey's intervention in Syria, and the measures of the authorities against minorities – for example, against Kurds. The Egyptian police detained 29 people on suspicion of spying for Turkey. In 2015, Cairo lobbied against Turkey and prevented the country from becoming a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Cairo did not renew the truck roll-on/roll-off (ro-ro) transportation agreement[3], which coordinated shipping between the Turkish ports of Mersin and İskenderun and the Egyptian ports of Alexandria, Damietta, and Port Said (Mogielnicki, 2019).

When the members of the Turkish Army tried to seize power on 15 July 2016, the Egyptian military and political leadership did not condemn the coup at all. Unlike in most other countries, the political and military leadership – confidently or openly – supported the plotting Turkish military officers and in the Arab media they described the events not as coup but rather a "revolution". On 17 July, Egypt vetoed a UN Security Council statement condemning the attempted coup in Turkey. After the Turkish authorities classified Fethullah Gülen's movements as a terrorist organisation – despite the fact that Gülen himself condemned the military action – and arrested thousands of their activists, Egypt started to welcome the persecuted Turks. Even the Arab country's parliament members sent a request to the government in 2016 to grant asylum for Gülen – like former President Anwar Sadat did to Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi after the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979. Although this did not happen, the Turkish press later always reported of Gülen's and other leading members' "possible refuge seeking" in Egypt (Hürriyet Dialy News, 2019).

In parallel, neither of the two countries' leaders has missed an opportunity to put the other one in an awkward situation. At the Munich Security Conference in 2019, al-Sisi suddenly recognised the Armenian Genocide, enraging the Turkish delegation. In the same year, Erdoğan rejected an offer to join a dinner with President Donald Trump upon seeing the Egyptian President sitting at the table – he rather stormed out of the room theatrically (Middle East Monitor 2019). Also in 2019, Mohamed Morsi died in prison: the Turkish leader paid a tribute, called Morsi a martyr, and blamed the Egyptian regime for his death (The New Arab, 2019).

[3] In 2012, Turkey and Egypt signed an additional deal of free transportation of Turkish vehicles to Egypt by sea. This permitted Turkish trading companies to access Gulf markets via Egyptian territory so they could avoid the dangerous overland trade routes through Iraq and Syria.

The "Cold War" Warms Up

Libya was the first hotspot in the Egyptian-Turkish geopolitical rivalry. During the short time of Morsi's presidency, both countries treated the post-Gaddafi Libyan leadership as an ally of "Axis of (Islam) Democracy", commonly supporting the local Islamist parties and organisations. After 2013, Cairo radically changed its attitude and tone towards Tripoli. The growing instability in the North African country meant a security threat for the post-2013 Egyptian leadership. Some of the deflected Muslim Brotherhood members joined the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord's (GNA) and its predecessor's militant groups. As the chaos grew bigger and bigger in Libya, its "spillover effect" worried the Egyptian government, because they thought the escaped Egyptian Islamists will carry out attacks from the Libyan territories. That is why the Egyptian Air Force – with the help of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – carried out air strikes against the militias in Tripoli in 2014 (Reuters Staff, 2014). Also, this military action sent a clear message: Cairo stands by general Khalifa Haftar, the commander of the Libyan National Army (LNA), who started the Second Libyan Civil War in the same year. The Egyptians were not alone, because France, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE also supported the Tobruk-based secularist House of Representatives (HoR). Egyptian involvement got more intensive when the Libyan branch of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) kidnapped twenty-one Coptic Christians near Sirte and beheaded them. Cairo sent its Air Force (again) to bomb the terrorist groups while Fattah al-Sisi took an active part in organising another international campaign in the South Mediterranean. Although the latter failed, it does not mean that Egypt had given up on Libya.

Behind Cairo's strong commitment lay some economic and geopolitical reasons too. In 2016, Haftar took control of the regional energy infrastructure so he could easily finance the Egyptian, Emirati, and Russian weapons and foreign mercenaries from oil export. Furthermore, some Egyptian companies saw opportunities in Libya's reconstruction and oil production (Cousins, 2017). Last but not least, there were one million Egyptian workers employed in the Libyan energy sector. Moreover, Cairo did not send just ammunition and weapons, but even with the help of the Egyptian special forces the LNA took cities like Derna. Despite the strong Egyptian – and Emirati and Saudi – pressure, however, Haftar did not sit down to the negotiating table but rather started a whole new military campaign against the GNA in 2019. His goal was to capture Tripoli and overthrow the government. In the beginning, the LNA advanced well, but few weeks later the siege was lifted. Moreover, Haftar's forces suffered heavy losses, started to retreat, and the GNA forces retook the lost territories.

This surprising turn of events was due to Turkey's role. Since the beginning, Ankara supported the Tripoli-based government like the United Nations, most EU-members and Qatar did. In the first years, this meant only diplomatic, economic, and slight military help – the Turkish units mostly gave advice, trained the militias, and assisted in the handling of drones and combat vehicles. But later Erdoğan decided to act

more seriously. The first sign of a more intensive Turkish role was the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with GNA on 27 November 2019, which determined a new maritime delimitation between the two countries. From the Turkish perspective, this agreement legalised Turkey's searching, drilling and exploration for natural gas near Libya's maritime borders. Even more, the MoU led to the evasion of sanctions, such as an arms embargo on Libya, the UN Security Council Resolution 1970 (Stanicek, 2020). Ankara sent more than 2 000 Syrian mercenaries and high-tech weaponry (for example *Bayraktar TB–2* drones, warships etc.) to help Tripoli's efforts.

The collapse of LNA and advance of the GNA fully surprised Egypt: Haftar's failure could end the influence of Tobruk's Arab (Egypt, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia) and international (France and Russia) allies in the country. That is why in the summer of 2020 Egypt started to mobilise its forces, and the number of soldiers drastically increased along the border. "Libya's Sirte and Al-Jufra are considered the red line for Egyptian national security" – said al-Sisi on June 2020 while he was visiting the biggest military airbase in West Egypt (Morsy, 2020). A few days later, a conference was organised in the capital of Egypt, where Haftar's ally tribesmen participated and asked Egyptian President to intervene in Libya. Meanwhile, the war rhetoric also appeared and spread in Egypt's society. Slogans such as "Egypt and Libya, one people, one fate," circulated in media. At the end of July, the members of the Egyptian parliament unanimously accepted that the national security interest should be defended on the strategic western front against the work of armed criminal militias and foreign terrorist elements. So, it is not surprising that many people thought that the *Hasm* (Firmness) military exercise was only a prelude to a second Egyptian-Libyan War (the first one broke out in 1977) and a possible direct clash with Turkish soldiers. The order to attack was not given, but this did not automatically lead to the end of hostilities between Ankara and Cairo.

In parallel with Libya, the gas fields of the East Mediterranean were also a conflict of interest. The core of the problems (unsolved maritime borderlines, economic zones etc.) may be traced back to the Mid-20th century, but after the overthrow of Morsi, they reached a whole new level. In 2013, Egypt's Foreign Ministry warned Turkey to avoid drilling for natural gas west of Cyprus. A few weeks later Nicosia signed a maritime boundary delimitation agreement with Cairo to examine the optimal use of promising natural gas prospects. The other goal was to weaken the Turkish position in the region – that is why Ankara still does not recognise the Republic of Cyprus's claims to an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) further than 20 kilometres beyond its territorial waters (Maher and Tsukerman, 2019). In November 2014, Cairo held a tripartite summit with Cyprus and Greece to demarcate the new maritime borders in the Mediterranean. In 2015, Cairo discovered a vast gas deposit: the Levant Basin, in the waters of Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey which contains circa 122.4 trillion cubic feet of recoverable gas. Since then, foreign energy companies such as British Petrol, Deutsche Erdoel AG, Ente Nazionali Idrocarburi (ENI), Russian Rosneft, and Emirati

Mubadala, have exposed six other large fields near Egypt – the richest is Zohr Field, where lie estimated 850 billion cubic metres of gas. As Egyptian gas production was stepped up, President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi claimed in 2019 that the Arab country had achieved natural gas self-sufficiency and could become a regional hub of trade and the main distributor of liquefied natural gas (Melcangi, 2020).

But Turkey meant a serious obstacle for the Egyptian leadership in reaching their economic dreams. To neutralise the Turkish claims in the East Mediterranean and isolate Ankara in the region, Cairo has worked not only with Cyprus and Greece, but with other players (Israel, Italy, and Jordan) too. Their goal was to create a new multilateral framework and to promote a new regional pattern for economic cooperation, informal dialogue, and political interdependence to overcome the existing fault lines in the wider Mediterranean. The Egyptian attempts proved to be fruitful: they founded the East Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) in 2019. The members of the so-called "OPEC of Mediterranean gas" are Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority[4], while the EU and the United States remain its permanent observers. As the Egyptian diplomacy described, the EMGF is an international organisation that respects its member states' rights to resource extraction, declares common war against "illegal drillings and mining" by other countries (e.g., Turkey), and strengthens energy cooperation (for instance, by building gas pipelines) among its members. Naturally, the formation of the EMGF angered Erdoğan. From the Turkish perspective these undersea resources would have been a cure for their economic problems. Until the beginning of the 2020s, Turkey remained almost entirely dependent on gas imports from Russia (53 per cent), Iran (17 per cent), and Azerbaijan (14 per cent), but as the economic problems grew in the country, it became a priority to reduce the dependence on foreign energetic resources (Mogielnicki, 2019). To counterbalance the EMGF, Ankara asserted the right of Northern Cyprus to explore and extract the undersea resources and sent warships to defend the Turkish drilling vessels. Secondly, in a *quid pro quo*, Turkey signed the formerly mentioned memorandum of understanding with the Tripoli-based Libyan government in 2019 – however, the regional countries successfully prevented to register this agreement in the United Nations Treaty Collection. In Summer 2020, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu called the Greek-Egyptian bilateral agreement, which was similar to the Cyprus-Egypt agreement from 2013, "null and void" and promised to defend the rights of Turkey and Turkish Cypriots (Stanicek, 2020). Soon after the announcement, warships showed up in Greek waters and the Turkish exploration continued, which evoked a harsh reaction even from the EU.

The Egyptian–Turkish "cold war" did not end here because there were some other "minor" cases where their geopolitical interests clashed too. Ankara supported the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project, and Turkey is now one of the three

[4] Later the PA vetoed against UAE, who was also a founding member. The reason behind this was the Emirati-Israeli normalisation and peace treaty.

largest foreign investors in Ethiopia – by 2021, it invested $2.5 billion in that country. Besides, if any other regional country (e.g., Algeria or Tunisia) got involved in a debate with Egypt, the Turkish diplomacy often lined up behind it. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir cooperated closely with Turkey. In 2017, Khartoum signed a four-billion-dollar project, which allowed Turkey to restore the old Ottoman port on the strategic island of Suakin in the Red Sea. Due to its proximity to the Egyptian coastline, Cairo – and Riyadh – saw the island as a Turkish bridgehead. That is why they supported the new Sudanese leadership after Bashir was deposed in April 2019 – and not surprisingly, the Suakin project was suspended (Maher and Tsukerman 2019). On the other hand, Cairo has consistently sided with those countries whose territories or citizens had been attacked by the Turkish military: for example, with Iraq or Syrian Kurds. Also, during the Morsi government, Qatar was an important partner for Egypt, but after 2013, relations hit rock bottom. Egypt withdrew its ambassador from the country and took part in the blockade against Doha in June 2017. Egypt-Air suspended its flights to and from Qatar, Qatar-flagged ships were banned from ports, and remaining Qatar nationals and companies were expelled from the country. Despite all efforts, though, the Arab states could not cripple the country because Iran and Turkey helped Doha to survive the blockade. Erdoğan called the isolation of Qatar an "inhumane and step against Islamic values". He could even strengthen his position in the Persian Gulf: Ankara provided not only food and medical supplies, but Turkish soldiers too, so in the end they opened a Turkish military base in Qatar (Altunişik, 2019).

Step by Step

Despite the very intensive rivalry in almost all dimensions, not everyone wanted to widen the gap between Egypt and Turkey – some aimed at reducing the tensions. For example, Turkish President Abdullah Gül, congratulated al-Sisi on his winning the presidential elections in 2014. Moreover, Turkish charge d'affaires to Cairo Alper Bosuter took part in the inauguration ceremony of al-Sisi, which, according to some experts, could be described as the de facto recognition of the regime (Éva, 2016). Later Turkey's former Prime Minister, Binali Yıldırım pointed out that *"normalization with Egypt is still possible"* (Al-Anani, 2020). The Egyptian diplomacy agreed with his statement, but only on one condition: Ankara should recognise the legitimacy of former President Mohamed Morsi's removal from power. But the Turkish plot in July 2016 reversed all these attempts. In parallel, the worsening situations in Libya, in the Persian Gulf and in the Eastern and Southern part of the Mediterranean Sea also ruled out any possible reconciliation.

A radical turn occurred in 2020. The Egyptian and Turkish intelligence officers and chieftains started to exchange messages through intermediaries and also in person. The Turkish authorities asked Egyptian opposition television channels operating in their country and the intellectuals close to the Muslim Brotherhood to moderate their

criticism of Egypt's government and stop attacks on al-Sisi. Also, the Turkish diplomacy lifted its veto against Egypt's partnership activities with NATO. By 2021, more and more members of the Turkish government had taken a stand for beginning rapprochement and sending a diplomatic mission to Egypt. "As friends, we strive to restore our historical unity with the Egyptian people" – said Erdoğan, after Sedat Önals, Turkey's deputy foreign minister had an official trip to Egypt (Soliman, 2021). During the two-day visit, which started on 5 May 2021, the parties did not only agree to continue with normalisation but also spoke about "sensitive" subjects such as the Mediterranean natural gas fields or the fate of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Rapprochement continued slowly but steadily. In August 2021, Turkey asked the Egyptian diplomacy for another round of talks, during which they discussed bilateral and regional (East Mediterranean, Libya, Syria etc.) issues. A few weeks later, a delegation led by Egypt's Deputy Foreign Minister for African Affairs Hamdi Sanad Loza went to Ankara and raised the issue of the next steps of normalisation (Al-Anani, 2020). The Turkish side approved some of the Egyptian requests: in 2022, the MB-affiliated, anti-Sisi satellite channel (*Mekameleen*) closed its studio and stopped broadcasting. Furthermore, some of the famous opponents of the Egyptian leadership, like Moataz Matar and Mohamed Nasser, left Turkey. In August 2022, Erdoğan called for improving ties with Egypt and stressed that he considered the Egyptian people "brothers" with whom Turkey must reconcile. He also expressed his hope of building strong relations at the highest diplomatic level (Al-Anani, 2022). Meanwhile, the Egyptian media became less critical to Erdoğan and Turkey's foreign policy alike.

The Catalysts behind Rapprochement

Many factors could be mentioned which led to the Egyptian–Turkish rapprochement. First of all, the geopolitical rivalry reached the ultimate limit. After the Gulf Cooperation Council summit in al-Ula in 2021, Saudi Arabia and UAE started to give up the blockade against Qatar – Cairo also followed them and slowly normalised its relations with Doha. Ankara was left out of the events in Sudan after the coup in 2019 and did not challenge the position of the other Arab states in the country. Moreover, the Turkish developed a distance from their former pro-Ethiopia stance and showed neutrality in the GERD-project. But the most significant of all was Libya. As a possible direct Egyptian-Turkish military clash loomed on the horizon, both leaderships ordered a retreat. Cairo was disappointed with Haftar. At the same time Ankara considered the Libyan intervention economically and militarily unsustainable because Turkey started a new military offensive in Syria and increased its military support to Azerbaijan, which a few weeks later started the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War. The Egyptian and Turkish diplomacy put hard pressure on their allies – Ankara on GNA, Cairo on Haftar – to continue the peace talks. Between 6 and 10 September 2020, with the blessing of the king, the Moroccan government hosted the "Libyan Dialogue" conference in Bouznika, bringing

surprising and breakthrough results. They agreed on oil production and selling, unifying the GNA's and the house of representatives' ministries, and reducing foreign influence. The "Bouznika Agreement" was an important political achievement for a long time and the country's leaders did not want to be those who destroy the peace process, which could continue in the following months (Hatim, 2020). On 24 October, the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum – with the members of GNA and HoR – was formed, while the LNA and Tripoli-led army signed a permanent ceasefire. From the Egyptian and Turkish perspective, this consisted the withdrawal of all foreign mercenaries and military forces within 90 days, finishing all military training and suspending heavy arms import to Libya.

The changes in Turkish foreign policy also contributed to the reconciliation. By 2020, the Turkish "Zero-Problems Policy" – which was adopted when the AKP came to power – led to "Zero-Friends Policy" in the MENA, especially with two Persian Gulf monarchies. The Turkish press accused the UAE with financing the Turkish plotters in 2016 (Paksoy, 2017). Despite the fact, that Saudi Arabia and Turkey stand on the same side in Syria, in many other cases they were enemies, like in Libya and Qatar. The killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul in 2018 increased tensions between the two countries. But during 2020, Ankara started a diplomatic campaign to restore relations with them. In Autumn 2021, Erdoğan went to UAE. Next year he repeated his trip to the Persian Gulf country and signed an agreement of a $10 billion Turkish investment (Egeresi, 2022b). In April 2022, Erdoğan visited Saudi Arabia and three months later Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met with the Turkish President in Ankara.

Last but not least, the economic factors also should be mentioned. According to the writer of this study, this dimension played the key role in the Egyptian-Turkish rapprochement. Of course, the strife had some negative consequences on bilateral trade and foreign direct investments (FDI). For example, the Egyptian side did not renew the ro-ro agreement or Turkish authorities opened anti-dumping investigations against Egyptian goods like cotton and polystyrene (Mogielnicki, 2019). But despite all these economic measures, Egyptian-Turkish trade decreased only slightly to a total of $4.5 billion in 2016, down just 10% from the 2013 peak. More ironically, bilateral trade indicators were better in 2017 than during the Morsi-era: it returned to around $5.33 billion in 2018 and Turkish import set a new record when it exceeded $3 billion (Mogielnicki, 2019). By 2020, Turkey became Egypt's third-largest importer. The strife did not affect the investments seriously either. According to officials, the volume of Turkish investments was an estimated $2 billion in Egypt, which meant 540 Turkish companies were registered in the Arab country – especially in the special economic zones near the Suez Canal and in the Egyptian manufacturing sector (Adly, 2021). The indicators, however, were not so good in the other direction, because Egyptian investments reached only $4 million. But what truly surprised the analyst and experts was that they started to collaborate in the energy sector too. Egypt had become a key

supplier of liquified natural gas to Turkey by 2021 – 7.2 million mt/year. Furthermore, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu said that Turkey and Egypt's normalisation efforts are crucial for developments in the Eastern Mediterranean, and that the two countries should collaborate in order to achieve their interests (Al-Anani, 2022).

Economic and health (COVID–19) problems also confirmed the intention to reduce tensions. Due to the slowdown in global trade, Egypt's revenues from the Suez Canal had been falling with transit fees having been reduced by 35–75% for some ships, depending on their type and destination. As all international flights were suspended, tourism has suffered most since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. Despite the government's USD 6.1 billion rescue package, Egypt's unemployment rate and inflation both rose, while exchange reserves and state subsidies decreased. The latter severely hit the poor and the members of the lower class, who had become highly dependent on subventions. The proportion of those who live under or around the poverty line had already increased significantly in Egypt: according to World Bank estimates, 60% of Egypt's population had been either poor or in the vulnerable category since 2019. In parallel, Turkey has not fared any better. Since mid-2013, the Turkish lira (TRY) has lost two thirds of its value, and when Donald Trump imposed sanctions against Turkey, the economy slid into recession in early 2019. Unemployment remained above 10 per cent. Public debt was around 32.1 per cent of the GDP. And all these pointers worsened when the COVID–19 pandemic hit the country. Thanks to measures Turkey's GDP grew 1,8% and the deficit reached "only" 40% in 2020. But despite all the government's efforts Ankara could not stop the devolution of TRY and inflation (Egeresi, 2022a).

Conclusion – The Possible Pitfalls

The meeting between Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in November 2022 signalled that both leaders are obliged to restore the former good – or at least less confrontational – relations. In the face of the Russian-Ukraine War, neither Ankara nor Cairo wants to give up their neutral/balancing position. If this happens, they can break their relations with Kyiv and Moscow alike. Because the geopolitical stakes are so high and most of the MENA countries want to stay out of the European conflict, this pushes them to solve the problems among them to prevent a possible "spillover effect" of the Russo-Ukrainian War. For example, mere days after the Russian invasion started, Israeli President Isaac Herczog made a surprise visit to Turkey to finish 14 years of tension between the two states (Egeresi, 2022b). Also, Erdoğan travelled to Saudi Arabia and UAE, while the peace process in Libya and Syria reached a new level. Even from the economic perspective, it became necessary for Ankara and Cairo to strengthen their trade and investment to counterbalance the negative effects of the energy crisis, food shortages (Egypt and Turkey heavily rely on grain and wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine), inflation (Turkey's reached 85% at end 2022) and devaluation.

Despite the fact that circumstances are pressing them, the rapprochement moves slowly. There are still mines on the road which could jeopardise the positive outcome of the diplomatic campaign. These pitfalls are not primarily political or ideological. As Turkey stopped to be a "safe haven" for the Egyptian Islamist opposition, the anti-Sisi media and Muslim Brotherhood pose a smaller threat for the Arab country. In parallel, the Egyptian media changed its tone towards Erdoğan and AKP, the number of official verbal attacks was reduced significantly, which also facilitates the process.

The solution lies elsewhere: in the geopolitical dimension. Despite the fact, that Qatar and Sudan no longer mean obstacles in Egyptian-Turkish normalisation, Libya and the East Mediterranean gas fields still count as a source of tension. Although the Libyan ceasefire, conciliation, and the country's upcoming elections have the blessing from Ankara and Cairo alike, this does not mean that they will turn their back on their Libyan partners. Indeed, Khalifa Haftar may have failed to achieve victory, but for Egypt – Saudi Arabia and UAE too – the LNA and Tobruk-based House of Representatives has remained a key ally. Meanwhile Ankara supports Abdul-Hamid Dbeibah, the head of the Government of National Unity in Tripoli, who rejected any transfer power until the elections are held – but this was postponed several times (Al-Anani, 2022). Closely linked with Libya, the competition for natural gas in the East Mediterranean remains a source of serious tensions too. Egypt and Turkey still have not demarcated their maritime borders. It is also unrealistic to expect that Cairo fundamentally changes its foreign and security policy in Ankara's favour. The EMGF is simply too important for the Egyptian leadership, and they did not want to weaken the Cypriot–Egyptian–Greek–Israeli "alliance". In parallel, Turkey will not give up its partners either: in October 2022, it signed a new agreement with Dbeibah's government, which allows Libyan and Turkish companies to carry out joint explorations in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Egyptian – with the Cypriot and the Greek – diplomacy strongly criticised the step and refused to continue the talks with Turkish partners. Later Ankara not only defended the pact but even accused Cairo that it is doing the same and Egypt with Greece endangers Turkey's interests (The Arab Weekly, 2022).

There is no doubt that in recent years normalisation has started, which both parties take seriously. Indeed, there are grounds for optimism that one of the main sources of tension in the Mediterranean may disappear in the near future. But some steps are still missing that could really herald the beginning of a new era in the Egyptian-Turkish relations. For example, in April 2022, Çavuşoğlu assured the parties that the mutual re-appointment of ambassadors is a "question of months". When this study was written, however, Salih Mutlu Sen, Turkey's former representative to the OIC, could still not take his post – and there was no information about the fate of Egypt's ambassador either (Soylu, 2022). The Erdoğan-al-Sissi handshake in Qatar meant a promising step in resolving the mutual distrust but until no other real steps follow the Egyptian-Turkish normalisation it remains rather a tactical *détente* than a stabilising force of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Turkish-Egyptian Relations after 2011: Political Dynamics of Geopolitical Turbulence[1]

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Abstract:

The Arab Spring process, which started in Tunisia in 2010 and soon spread throughout the entire Arab world, ended in 2011 with the resignation of Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt. Subsequently, as a result of the parliamentary elections held on November 28, 2011, the election of Mohammed Morsi under the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood caused great enthusiasm in the Turkish public and marked a high point in the history of bilateral relations. However, in 2013, relations reached a breaking point and were reduced to a minimum after Morsi and his supporters were removed from power in a coup. On the other hand, in addition to the deep-rooted historical backgrounds of Turkey and Egypt, the presence of diplomatic opportunities in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean in a geopolitical context enabled the repeated development of bilateral relations. Thanks to all of this, relations between the two states began to normalize at the diplomatic level since the end of 2020.

This study examines reasons for the development of the turbulent relationship between the two countries, which quickly reached both the peak and the bottom, before it began to normalize due to its geopolitical importance. The first part of the study examines Turkey's foreign policy during the Arab Spring and its reflections on Egypt. The second part analyzes the reasons for the relations that peaked with the Morsi era. Then, it examines the causes of the negative impact of the military coup that took place in Egypt in 2013, which led to the breaking point in bilateral relations. Finally, it seeks to comprehensively explore the causes of turbulent relations by examining relations that have recently begun to normalize due to geopolitical concerns.

Keywords:

Arab Spring, Egypt, geopolitics, turbulent relations, Turkey

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Introduction

From the last period of the Ottoman Empire to the present day, Turkish–Egyptian relations have had a turbulent structure. Since the late 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had lost its de facto dominance over Egypt. Afterward, the attempts to re-dominate Egypt during the First World War were inconclusive. At the end of the war, first the Ottoman Empire renounced its sovereign rights over Egypt with the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres (Derecho Internacional, n. d.) and then its successor state, the Turkish Republic, with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs (n.d a).

Turkey's independence aspirations, which began after the First World War, were followed closely and sympathetically by Egyptian intellectuals (Baş, 2015, p. 39). Although the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 was met with suspicion, relations were restored when Turkey renounced its sovereign rights over Egypt with the proclamation of the Republic. On the other hand, Turkey's pursuit of the modernization movement in the early years of the republic led to a break in relations (Köse, 2017, p. 81).

Subsequently, the Arab-Israeli conflicts had continued the negative trend in relations. Although Turkey's initial negative vote on the decision of 30 November 1947 to divide Palestine between Arabs and Jews had a positive effect on the Arab world, it lost this positive attitude when it took office in the Palestine Conciliation Commission in 1948. In addition, Turkey received financial support from the United States and the Western world in order to ensure its own security and develop its economy, and the recognition of the State of Israel provoked strong criticism from Arab countries, particularly Egypt (Tiryakioğlu, 1979, pp. 84–85).

From this period until 2002, when the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, *AKP*) came to power in Turkey, the fluctuating relations continued. With AKP's coming to power in 2002, Turkey's perspective on the Middle East took on a new dimension. During this period, AKP made intensive efforts to get closer to Islamic countries that had been shunned by the Kemalist governments (Efegil, 2016, p. 46). Thus, relations with Arab states, including Egypt, developed rapidly and reached the level of friendship and brotherhood. It was during this period that Turkey developed an understanding of the 'brother countries' towards the Arab states. Thus, AKP wanted to increase its influence in the Middle East by using its soft power (Ekşi, 2018, p. 77).

In the process from 2011 to the present day, which constitutes the main focus of this study, the relations have experienced and are still experiencing one of the most fluctuating periods in their history. Although the turbulent relations that began during the Arab Spring reached a peak with the Muslim Brotherhood's rise to power in 2012, they plummeted back to the lowest point with the coup in 2013. Even recent geopolitically motivated normalization efforts have been on a turbulent trajectory.

In the brief historical overview above, I showed that Turkish-Egyptian relations have had their ups and downs throughout the history. From the last period of the Ottoman Empire until the Arab Spring, relations were at times friendly and stagnant. However, with the Arab Spring, relations reached their historical peak and then declined. It is therefore very important to analyze the reasons why relations reached their peaks and troughs in such a short period of time. In fact, this analysis can also contribute to normalization work today. It is necessary for both countries to take rational decisions by putting their national interest first and emotional motivations second.

Besides, Turkey and Egypt are both Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Consequently, they are inevitably and directly affected by the problems arising in these regions. In this respect, peace and stability that will prevail in the region are vital for Turkey and Egypt, which are obliged to solve their economic and social problems and to develop. This is also true for other Arab states in the region. Realistic and fruitful cooperation between the two countries is an important step towards ensuring peace and stability in the region. Therefore, there is no situation that can prevent this friendship. The historical, religious, and cultural ties between the two countries can lay the foundations for a strong friendship to pursue national and common interests. Through mutual visits and joint efforts to solve the problems, Turkey and Egypt must prevent imperialist states from causing unrest and destabilization in the region.

I consider the Arab Spring as a period in this study because its effects are also very much felt in today's normalization dynamics. For this reason, it is very important to provide a comprehensive analysis of the ups and downs of political relations that began with the Arab Spring process. It is essential to identify the root causes of the latter, so that the two states do not make the same mistake in the latest normalization phase, which began at the end of 2020 and is still ongoing.

1. General Policy of Turkey during the Arab Spring

After a young man set himself on fire in Tunisia in 2010, Tunisians revolted against the regime, which then had repercussions for the whole Arab world. This struggle against authoritarian regimes was then known as the Arab Spring (Teti and Gervasio, 2011, p. 1).

The policy pursued by the AKP in power during the Arab Spring has provided a very interesting framework for Turkish foreign policy. In the pre-Arab Spring period, the AKP government sought to create zero problems with its neighbours[3], the

[3] The AKP's foreign policy doctrine over a period of time. Accordingly, it has sought to resolve conflicts with its neighbors through diplomacy and to develop close relations. The core elements of the doctrine are based on the book Strategic Depth written by Ahmet Davutoğlu.

establishment of order in the Middle East, regional peace, stability, prosperity, and similar values (Gözen, 2011, p. 2). However, the Arab Spring has turned the region into a battlefield (Duran and Özdemir, 2012, p. 186). In Turkey's final position on the Arab Spring, it can be argued that it followed an increasingly escalating process and eventually became a concrete policy. This process can be divided into five stages.

The first is a cautious, anxious, timid, and hesitant attitude. From 2002, when the AKP government came to power, until 2011, the beginning of the Arab Spring, Turkey was able to build an increasingly positive image of itself in the whole Islamic world, and especially in the Arab countries. In parallel with this image, Turkey had developed good commercial, economic, social, political, diplomatic, and strategic relations with these countries. Turkey's initial hesitancy in this respect was basically due to concern that its direct or indirect, material or image benefits might be damaged (Gözen, 2011, p. 15).

Second, Turkey has mediated between the rebel opposition and the dictators and consulted with Western countries to resolve the crisis. Meetings with Egyptian, Libyan and Syrian actors, as well as impressions and assessments gained in telephone or face-to-face meetings with leaders of other Western countries, have had a huge impact on Turkey's decision (CNN, 2011). In this direction, with Western support for change, the understanding of a turn towards the West has once again dominated since the history the republic. Turkey, with its Western identity, sided with the people demanding democracy. Thus, it advised the forces of regime change to implement first and foremost the necessary reforms (Balcı, 2013, p. 310). Later, this position was gradually strengthened on the side of the dissidents.

Thirdly, the clear stand on the side of the rebels and against the dictators means that Turkey clearly started to support the Arab Spring process. I mentioned earlier that one of the important reasons for this change in Turkey was the tendency to continue along the path of westernization after the establishment of the republic. However, it should also be emphasized here that it would be wrong to explain Turkey's commitment to the opposition side of the Arab Spring solely in terms of its so-called Western identity. I believe that there are many other reasons for this situation. For example, the 'moderate Islam'[4] orientation of the insurgents was an important factor in Turkey's desire to become a leader in the Middle East. Turkey, with its liberal right-wing democracy, which can co-exist with Islam and democracy, could have strengthened its "democratic gains" by setting an example as a guardian to these countries, and while doing so, consolidating its leadership in the Middle East. Indeed, according to the moderate Islamic ideology, which is in line with the Muslim Brotherhood, democracy is a phenomenon that exists at the very core of Islam (Ülger, 2016, p. 149). In this context, if the adherents of this

[4] In the West, this is the name given to a modernist and democratic interpretation of Islam that rejects radical and jihadist views.

ideology had succeeded, they would presumably have looked to Turkey as their model for democracy rather than to Western democratic systems.

Moreover, Turkish support for opposition forces can also be understood from a social constructivist perspective. According to this approach, normative values such as identity, faith and historical ties are significantly constitutive in shaping the foreign policy preferences of decision-makers (Çelikcan, 2020, p. 29). At the same time, once the AKP came to power, it determined the policy of establishing close relations with the Middle East countries due to its historical background and strategic interests. In this spirit, it has proceeded along the lines of "conservative democrats", both by preserving Islamic values and by embracing democratic values (Özkoç, 2017, p. 83; Kayalı, 2016, p. 208). In this context, from a constructivist perspective, the uprising for democracy by opposition groups espousing Islamic values, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, during the Arab Spring is quite similar to the AKP's understanding of social values and identity.

Fourth, Turkey has become involved in the Arab Spring developments at an advanced level, even pursuing a strident policy from time to time (Gözen, 2011, p. 4). Ankara harshly condemned the Egyptian military coup against Morsi and subsequently reduced all diplomatic contacts with Egypt to the lowest level (Demirtaş, 2013). It supported the struggle of the Government of National Accord (GNA)[5] in Libya against General Khalifa Haftar[6] and sent troops to Libya following a decision by the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Euronews, 2020). In Syria, it has been involved in proxy wars by providing extensive support to the Free Syrian Army in the civil war (Anadolu Agency, 2018). At the same time, it has repeatedly intervened militarily in Syria in self-defence and in the name of national security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, n. d.).

Fifthly, Turkey is pursuing a smart power politics aimed at getting out of the current situation with as little damage as possible. Accordingly, Turkey applies both hard and soft power elements. In this context, it seeks to maximize its political leverage by mixing its military presence in Syria and Libya with soft power elements. In Syria, for example, Turkey has complemented soft power with military operations and hard power policies by providing infrastructure services in the region, health, food, accommodation, and education services, and in this context has started to engage in smart power diplomacy (Ekşi, 2018, p. 88). While Libya maintained its military support to the GNA, it signed a maritime boundary agreement to protect energy security in the Eastern Mediterranean. It has also sought to legitimise its military presence by emphasising its support for the elected Libyan government in the international arena. Another example is Turkey's support for the GNA government, maintaining its presence in Libya despite the Egyptian government's discomfort and entering the normalization phase with Egypt. Even if this situation is detrimental to normalization efforts with

[5] The legitimate Libyan government recognized by the United Nations.
[6] Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan National Army and rival of the GNA in the civil war.

Egypt, Turkey is trying to strike a balance with the principle of least damage (Cumhuriyet, 2022). In this context, I can say that Turkey is trying to cover the devastating impact of the Arab Spring with minimum damage and maximum benefit.

1.1. Turkey's Policy towards Egypt during the Arab Spring

In 2011, the revolutionary movement that spread to Egypt led to the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak's regime. Turkey's policy in Egypt was no different from its policy towards other Arab states and supported the opposition movement (Özyürek, 2016, p. 4). As discussed in the previous part of this paper, the desire to serve as a role model for moderate Islamic movements that came to power through elections plays an important role in this. In particular, if we take into account the political dynamics of Egypt and Turkey, the political structure of the Muslim Brotherhood is quite similar to the political conception of the AKP. It should be noted here, however, that Turkey has a tradition of democracy, albeit not perfect, and the AKP also adheres to the limits of this tradition to a certain extent, even if it follows an authoritarian line. In my opinion, there is a similarity between the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood; the AKP is a democratic and relatively secular version of the Muslim Brotherhood. In this similarity, the AKP's desire to create a leadership model is due to its relative development.

For these reasons, Turkey was one of the first countries to openly support the popular uprising that began in Egypt. In this regard, following the protests that spread to Egypt, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan called for the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 (İHA, 2011). For Ankara, whose relations with the Assad government deteriorated during this period, Cairo was critical for the integration of the region (Özyürek, 2016, p. 107).

A day after calling on Mubarak to resign, Erdoğan said *"we have no intention of interfering in Egypt's internal affairs, but we are not a country that watches the Middle East from the sidelines."* He linked this stance of Turkey to its vision of active participation in regional politics (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 345). A few days later, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu stressed that *"the change in Egypt, the heart of the Arab world, will have a positive domino effect in the region"* and explained how Egypt is vital to Turkey's regional vision. Then, Former Turkish President Abdullah Gül showed how important he considered Egypt to be, as he was the first head of state to visit Egypt after the uprising (BBC, 2013). These developments indicated that Turkey was developing a new Egypt-centric regional policy to fill the power vacuum created by the Arab uprisings in the Middle East (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 345).

2. The Morsi Era in Egypt: Political Relations between 2012-2013

After the Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi won the Egyptian presidential election in June 2012, Turkish-Egyptian relations entered a golden age in their history (Köse, 2017, p. 166). The rise to power of a political movement ideologically close to the AKP in Egypt created a unique opportunity for Turkey to increase its prestige and influence in the Middle East (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 348). After all, one of the main reasons for Turkey's support for the Egyptian rebellion was ideological affiliation (Taş, 2022, p. 723). The AKP's guidance on electoral strategies for the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in the post-revolutionary period, was a concrete sign of its desire to see a government in Egypt that was ideologically close to it (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 348).

The first example of harmony in regional policy during this period was in Syria. The Egyptian-led Syrian Quadrilateral Regional Contact Group, which was set up to bring together Egypt, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, enjoyed the full support of Turkey. At the first official meeting of the Contact Group held in Cairo on 17 September 2012, former Foreign Minister Davutoğlu stated that Turkey and Egypt's perspectives on Syria were 100 per cent in agreement and declared that *"in cooperation with Egypt, we will build a new Middle East with the participation of other states."* (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 349). Davutoğlu further said, "it is symbolic that the meeting was held in Cairo. Because there has been a change in line with the wishes of the people here, and there is an administration that comes to power with the votes of the people", clearly expressing his confidence and support for the Morsi administration (İnat, 2012, p. 15).

On the other hand, Morsi, who visited Turkey a few months after his election, made a speech at the AKP Congress on Syria and Palestine and reaffirmed Turkey's role in the region. Erdoğan made a return visit to Cairo in November 2012, when the conflicts between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip escalated. This visit was prominent in the Turkish press and was reported under the headline *"Erdoğan and Morsi warned Israel"* (TRT, 2012). Erdoğan's speeches during this visit focused on the Palestinian issue and cooperation between Turkey and Egypt, stressing that the two countries can govern and create stability in the region without external mediators. After the visit, Turkey also joined Egypt's efforts to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, a contribution that Egypt appreciated (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 349). In my view, another notable message during the visit was Morsi's: *"Israel should know very well that the countries of the region are not the former regional countries, and the regional leaders are not the former leaders. If Israel makes a move, it must be prepared to be punished for it."* (TRT, 2012). First of all, this rhetoric was very similar to the one Erdoğan used against Israel. Second, the emphasis on the fact that regional leaders are not ex-leaders suggests that Turkey's perception that it is on the side of the Ummah with the AKP was also manifested in Egypt.

Finally, in the summer of 2013, while the Morsi opposition in Egypt was gaining strength, Turkey continued to provide political guidance and assistance to the Muslim Brotherhood government. Most significantly, a few weeks before the major anti-Morsi protests of 30 June 2013, Hakan Fidan, former Undersecretary of State of the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT), travelled to Egypt to make recommendations and met with Morsi. All these facts showed that the Morsi government was trying to take advantage of its alliance with Turkey to fight the growing domestic opposition. It should be stressed that in this difficult political environment, the Muslim Brotherhood government found the support and guidance of a regional power like Turkey valuable in countering elements of the old regime and opposition (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 352).

3. Impact of the 2013 Military Coup on Political Relations

Both Morsi and the uncompromising attitude of the opposition paved the way for the coup in Egypt. The whole policy of the Muslim Brotherhood was to fill the void left by the old regime. They did not put forward political and social projects that would have brought pluralist democracy to Egypt or eliminated social inequalities. Wages that remained below inflation, rising taxes and reduced government support worsened living conditions (Köse, 2017, p. 167). As the situation became increasingly unfavourable, Morsi lost public support and even started protests against him (Kingsley, 2013). Secondly, the Muslim Brotherhood was not welcomed by actors of the old regime such as the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the media and the business world. Opposition groups, who believed they would lose the privileges they had gained during the blessed period, did everything they could to bring down the Morsi government (Köse, 2017, p. 168). Finally, the most important reason for the military coup is that, in addition to the Mubarak-era actors, international actors in the country, such as Israel, the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, were also disturbed by the ideology and foreign policy approach of the Muslim Brotherhood and its intention to normalize relations with Iran. These foreign states, which had cooperated with opposition groups within the country and with actors of the old regime, put an end to Morsi's rule. The support of Turkey, Qatar, Libya, and Tunisia proved insufficient for the Morsi government. The old regime managed to re-consolidate its power and eventually removed the Muslim Brotherhood from power in a military coup (Köse, 2017, p. 168).

On 3 July 2013, a military coup led by Egyptian Defence Minister Abdel Fattah es-Sisi was met with counter-demonstrations by pro-Muslim Brotherhood members and the general population against the military coup (Alsharif and Perry, 2013). The military administration's disproportionate response to the anti-coup protests triggered a period of crisis in relations between Ankara and Cairo. Erdoğan reacted very harshly to the military coup in Egypt, both on national and international platforms. Likewise, Turkey has strongly criticised the Western countries' lack of reaction to the coup (Reuters, 2013). Moreover, Turkey opened its doors to Muslim Brotherhood members such as Amr

Darrag[7], Jamal Abdul-Sattar[8], and Wagdi Ghoneim[9] (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 353). Relations with Egypt were first briefly strained by the repeated public condemnation of the coup and the refusal of Turkey to recognise the coup government, as well as protests over investigations and punishments against the Muslim Brotherhood, and then clearly stalled in November 2013 when the ambassadors of the two countries were declared persona non grata (Yeşilyurt, 2020, p. 353). Turkey's rigid reaction, which led to the outbreak of the crisis in bilateral relations, in fact has several causes.

Turkey's most frequently voiced argument is that the removal of a government elected by popular vote by a coup undermines democracy, which it considers unacceptable (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 2013). Throughout Turkey's history, conservative governments have at times been exposed to military intervention on the grounds that they have moved away from the line of secularism. In particular, the postmodern coup[10] against the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, *RP*) in 1997, of which Erdoğan was a member, caused great sensitivity and concern among the AKP cadres that came to power in 2002 (BBC, 2021). Earlier in this paper, I mentioned the similarities in the political views of the AKP and the Muslim Brotherhood. In this context, it is understandable that the AKP perceives this coup as being organized against itself and reacts harshly accordingly. In fact, statements by AKP administrators indicate that they have internalized the coup.

In the previous part of the paper, I also referred to the AKP's potential to approach the Muslim Brotherhood as a kind of role model, almost a "guardian", in its conservative Islamist and democratic form. It also meant that Turkey had a very critical ally in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean with whom it had 'a heart and soul bond'. Yet perhaps most importantly, Turkey had the opportunity to reassert its leadership in the Middle East as a role model for Egypt. However, Ankara's chances were dashed in one fell swoop by the Cairo coup, after which Egypt continued to pursue a secular dictatorship. For all these reasons, relations with Egypt quickly reached perhaps the lowest point in its history.

The deterioration of relations between Turkey and Egypt led to a change in Egypt's Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean policy (Grigoriadis, 2014, p. 130). Egypt has moved closer to Bashar Assad's Syria on the one hand and has allowed the YPG/PYD to open an office in Cairo on the other (Erol, 2020). It has even sent 150 soldiers to Syria to support President Assad (CNN, 2020). In addition, the opportunities for gas production in the Eastern Mediterranean bring with them different economic and diplomatic initiatives between different countries. In this process, two triple alliances have been formed, one between Greece, Cyprus, and Egypt, and the other between

[7] The former Minister of Planning and International Cooperation during the Morsi era.
[8] The former Deputy Head of the Egyptian Religious Affairs Directorate.
[9] Member of Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist preacher.
[10] The process of forcing the government to resign through the media without directly seizing the administration by the Turkish Armed Forces on February 28, 1997, on the grounds of reactionism.

Greece, Cyprus, and Israel. While these alliances and rapprochements have negatively affected Egyptian-Turkish relations, they have improved Egyptian-Israeli relations (Kalyoncuoğlu and Kalyoncuoğlu, 2022, p. 24). All this suggests that the deteriorated relations have negatively affected Turkey both in the Middle East and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

4. Normalization for Geopolitical Interest

The normalization process between Turkey and Egypt started in late 2020. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan signalled this in August 2020 with an announcement that the intelligence services of the two countries had held talks. During that period, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu noted that attempts had been made to normalize with Egypt and stated that he had held a face-to-face meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Samih Shukri at the 2020 Organization of the Islamic Conference meeting and offered to work together on normalization (Şener, 2022, pp. 33–34).

Following these developments, the first round of negotiations between the two countries' Deputy Foreign Ministers took place in May 2021. Turkey and Egypt, which are considered rivals in the Eastern Mediterranean, announced that they had agreed to resume negotiations to stabilize relations after the second round of talks. In a joint statement, they said that they agreed to extend the talks following a two-day meeting in Ankara, reaffirming the will to make progress in the areas discussed and the need for further steps to normalize bilateral relations. (Kalyoncuoğlu and Kalyoncuoğlu, 2022, p. 27).

Through its normalization efforts, Turkey welcomed Egypt's respect for the continental shelf announced by Turkey in its hydrocarbon exploration. Thus, despite the agreement signed with Greece, Egypt has not started exploration activities in the areas that intersect the continental shelf declared by Turkey. (Şener, 2022, p. 34).

The process of rapprochement and normalization between the parties was then accelerated when Turkey made a written statement that the Turkish-Egyptian talks in Cairo had been conducted in a friendly atmosphere and on a broad basis. Another positive influence was the statements made by the two countries on the creation of an environment of peace and security in the Eastern Mediterranean (Kalyoncuoğlu and Kalyoncuoğlu, 2022, p. 27). Commenting on these meetings, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu said, *"As the two countries with the longest land and coastline in the Eastern Mediterranean, we can negotiate with Egypt tomorrow on maritime jurisdictions and sign an agreement between us in the future, depending on the development of our relations"* (BBC, 2021). All this reflected the level of rapprochement and normalization that has been achieved so far.

In response to this, Ankara intervened in the Egyptian media broadcasts from Turkey, leading some media outlets to significantly change their previously strong anti-

Sisi tone, which was met with satisfaction in Cairo (Deutsche Welle, 2021). In fact, these normalization efforts were also positively received by the Muslim Brotherhood (Hamsici, 2022). Ali Hamed, the Muslim Brotherhood's press spokesman in Turkey, stated that *"Relations between the two peoples are already continuous and now the greater the distance between the governments, the better, because the leaders are not permanent, but the countries are"* (Hamsici, 2022).

As I have mentioned above and repeatedly stressed in this study, an important reason for the rapprochement was the geopolitical interests of the two countries in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. In contrast to the reconciliation of the Morsi era, the parties approached each other not with 'ties of the heart' but with 'strategic ties.'

Another reason for political convergence is the economy. Economically, eight years have been wasted in relations between Turkey and Egypt. This negative state of relations between the two countries has been reflected on both sides. For Turkey alone, this has meant the loss of a two-billion-dollar investment region, in addition to the loss of trade volume of around five billion dollars, and the loss of transit trade through Egyptian ports to the Gulf region (Öztürk, 2021, p. 207). Despite previous political tensions, it is in the interest of both countries that trade relations between Turkey and Egypt continue to recover after the partial downturn. With a population of nearly 110 million, Egypt needs markets like Turkey where it can generate stable export volumes. Likewise, Turkey benefits from Egypt as a country with a large population and links to Africa. Therefore, considering the benefits they bring to each other, it seems a logical step for the parties to pay attention to their sensitivities, not only from an energy perspective, but also from a commercial and political perspective (Kalyoncuoğlu and Kalyoncuoğlu, 2022, pp. 27-28). In the normalization phase, economic relations and political relations are mutually reinforcing. In my view, while the importance of economic relations leads to political convergence, this political convergence is likely to be reflected more positively in economic relations in the future.

In October 2022, Egyptian Foreign Minister Samih Shukri announced that the normalization process had been unilaterally suspended by Cairo due to Turkey's failure to take any action on Libya (Cumhuriyet, 2022). However, when Erdoğan was asked about relations with Egypt and Syria when he attended the G20 summit in Indonesia in November 2022, he said, "There can be no resentment in politics forever. When the time comes, you sit down, evaluate it, and you can make a renewal accordingly" - showing that the normalization process is continuing. Likewise, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's greeting and handshake with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Es Sisi at the opening reception for leaders at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar is another example of the continuing normalization process (BBC, 2022).

Normalization has accelerated especially since the beginning of 2023. The tragic earthquake centred in Kahramanmaraş/Turkey on February 6 gave rise to earthquake

diplomacy (Deutsche Welle, 2023). Egypt conveyed a message of solidarity in response to the earthquake. Immediately after the catastrophe, Sisi phoned Erdoğan and wished mercy on the victims and a swift recovery for the injured (TRT, 2023). Subsequently, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry undertook a visit to Turkey, offering gestures of solidarity and condolences. This was Cairo's highest-level visit to Turkey in more than a decade (CNN, 2023). The disaster created an appropriate environment to further accelerate the normalization process between Turkey and Egypt (Bakır, 2023).

The rapprochement created by earthquake diplomacy continued with Çavuşoğlu's visit to Cairo. From Turkish side, this was the first ministerial visit after 11 years (Deveci, 2023). During this visit, Çavuşoğlu stated that they wanted to increase cooperation in military, energy, and commercial fields (BBC, 2023). The demand for increased cooperation in the military sense is an indication that normalization efforts are not only a commercial aspect. His recurrent use of the term 'brother' when referring to his counterpart indicated the potential for normalization extending beyond strategic ties. Additionally, he expressed the intention to promptly appoint an ambassador to Cairo (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, 2023). It is significant for the expediting of normalization process.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict could have both positive and negative effects on the rapprochement between the two countries. The Egyptian government, which has strategic relations with Israel and the United States and ideological differences with Hamas, wants to protect its diplomatic interests while at the same time avoiding public backlash (Telci, 2023; Taha, 2023). For this reason, it has often emphasized the interests of the Palestinian people, even though it has mostly acted as a mediator (Telci, 2023). On the Turkish side, Erdoğan stated that he did not consider Hamas as a terrorist organization (Gumrukcu and Hayatsever, 2023). Although it is unlikely that the two countries will agree on this issue, it seems that they will agree on in terms of the humanitarian perspective of civil losses and interests of the Palestinian people (Khazen et al., 2023). Concurrently, while in Ankara, Shoukry asserted that *"there exists a substantial consensus between Egypt and Turkey regarding the Palestinian issue, particularly in supporting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people"* (Khazen et al., 2023).

Following this, Hakan Fidan, the new Foreign Minister of Turkey, visited Egypt, signalling that normalization would be a paramount focus of the government. It was also indicated that a consensus was reached on the immediate cessation of hostilities and intensified efforts to restore calm (Euronews, 2023). Gaza Diplomacy continued at the level of presidents of the two states. In the initial telephone conversation between presidents Erdoğan and Sisi in November 2023, discussions encompassed Israel's assaults on Gaza and potential measures to secure a ceasefire (Altaş, 2023). Subsequently, at the Extraordinary Joint Summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League, Erdoğan and Sisi delved into considerations regarding humanitarian aid and actions against conflict (NTV, 2023). Based on this, it can be said that by

emphasizing the issues on which the two states agree regarding the Gaza blockade, it has turned the normalization process perfectly into an advantage so far. Notably, the influences of earthquake diplomacy and Palestine diplomacy are evident in the hastening of the normalization trajectory. Although the differences of opinion regarding Hamas have not been emphasized so far, it remains unclear how they will affect the issue in the future. However, so far, leaders have chosen to expedite their normalization by conducting diplomacy on the issues they agree on.

Conclusion and Recommendations

At the heart of the turbulent relations are the changes in Egypt. Since the start of the Egyptian revolution in 2011, there have been several changes in the political forces. However, the AKP, in power in Turkey since 2002, has remained in power through all these internal dynamics. On the other hand, it would not be correct to claim that the AKP has pursued a stable policy towards Egypt. As the study shows, although the AKP has changed its policy mainly in line with the change of political power in Egypt, it has pursued a different policy. The best example of this is the normalization of relations, which reached its nadir with the Sisi administration, in line with current interests. The fact that there are challenges in the normalization phase brings with it some conclusions in order to avoid making the same mistakes in the future as in the past.

Recently, the Egyptian government announced that the normalization process has been suspended because Turkey has not taken any steps on Libya. However, both Erdoğan's statements at the G20 summit in Indonesia and the handshake between the two leaders at the opening of the World Cup in Qatar show that the normalization process is continuing. In this context, I would like to make some suggestions for a more effective way forward for normalization, which is in the national interest of both countries.

Turkey should not interfere in Egypt's internal political dynamics, as it did in the Arab Spring process. Democracy should not be a means for Turkey to gain influence in Egypt. If Egypt switches to democracy, it should do so because it believes it really needs to. Turkey's rhetoric will not speed up Egypt's transition to democracy; on the contrary, it will have a negative impact on relations. In the same way, Turkey is a country whose democratization process is continuing. However, the discourse of democratization coming from the West is generally not welcomed in Turkey and is perceived, on the contrary, as interference by the West in domestic affairs. This is also true for Egypt.

Moreover, Sisi's seizure of power in the coup and Turkey's response to it, i.e. the severing of ties, did not strengthen Turkey's leadership in the Middle East, in fact it did. On the contrary, Turkey has become even more isolated in the region. Similarly, the loss of a partner like Turkey has deprived Egypt of an important partner in the region

and in economic relations. The deterioration of bilateral relations is not in the interest of either party.

On Libya, Turkey supports the legitimate government recognized by the UN. Therefore, the presence of Turkish soldiers in Libya should be considered legitimate. Ankara should not make any concessions in this situation. However, the Turkish leadership must not use the presence in Libya as a threat to Egypt. Turkey's presence in Libya must be tailored to the Libyan GNA's request and must not infringe on Libya's sovereign rights.

The rapprochement between the two countries is of great importance for their national interests, as a result of normalization and the establishment of a strategic partnership. In contrast to the Morsi-era rapprochement, this rapprochement is not a "bond of the heart" but a strategic reconciliation because of geopolitical and economic interests. It is very important for the future that both sides take the step and establish a strategic partnership. Because the peoples of Turkey and Egypt are two nations that have been sincerely linked throughout history. This strategic rapprochement will bring with it a bond of hearts in the future, regardless of governments.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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Trends in Egyptian Terrorism in the Post-Mubarak Period[1]

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Abstract:

Egypt has experienced a distinct wave of terrorism since the early 1980s. An analysis of trends shows that the intensity of political violence and armed clashes has increased significantly since the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi on 3 July 2013. Terrorist acts have since spread from the Sinai Peninsula to mainland Egypt, where the perpetrators have included religious fundamentalists and marginalised Bedouin groups in society, as well as increasing numbers of political opponents of the Sisi regime. However, the use of extremist means to gain religious, ideological, and political legitimacy has provoked an increasingly violent response from the Cairo leadership, which has launched several large-scale operations to dismantle terrorist bases in the country. Although the clashes have claimed the lives of thousands of soldiers, police and civilians, the fight is far from over.

In the present study, the authors outline the demographic background and social problems of Egypt's modern history of terrorism, in an attempt to give a sense of the trends. Their overall conclusion is that, despite the Egyptian government's propaganda announcements, the large-scale action of the security forces has not been able to completely eradicate the presence of fundamentalists in the country but has been able to significantly reduce their operational capabilities in the region.

Keywords:
Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood, Mohamed Morsi, terrorism

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Introduction

Over the past decade and a half, the Egyptian government has been engaged in an intensive fight against terrorism on home soil, particularly in the Sinai. Although the fight against insurgents and extremists has intensified since President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi came to power, the expected overwhelming victory has not been achieved and the terrorist organisations operating in the Sinai have not been dismantled. Today, the government is practically fighting a covert war with terrorist groups and some local communities in Sinai, who are constantly suffering the consequences of air strikes, forced displacement or even deprivation of basic services. However, this approach has triggered new conflicts and terrorist attacks, which have already claimed the lives of thousands of officials and civilians since the 2011 revolution.

The aim of the study is to take stock of and analyse the demographic, social and political factors that have led to the emergence of terrorism in parts of Egypt over the past 30 years, culminating in violent acts against members of the majority society who are considered to be targeted for some reason. In this context, the authors aim to analyse the background and trends of violent manifestations of fundamentalism, characterise the actors involved and assess the response of the central authorities, with a particular focus on the factors that have influenced its effectiveness.

The Demographic and Economic Context of Terrorism in Sinai

The Sinai Peninsula covers an area of 60,088 square kilometres, which is less than 6% of Egypt's total land area. Its population of around 550,000 is also a fraction of the Arab state's estimated total population of 104 million (2022 estimates). The picture is further complicated by the fact that around 79% of the Sinai's population - around 434. 000 people - are concentrated in the northern half of the region, in towns heavily affected by the fighting such as Al-Arish,[4] Sheikh Zuweid,[5] Rafah[6] or Bir al-Abed[7] (Al-Anani, 2020). Another important aspect is that about 70% of them are Bedouin, belonging to one of some 15–20 tribes and with significant kinship ties on both sides of the Egyptian-Israeli border.

The remainder are refugees of Palestinian origin from the city of Rafah on the border with the Gaza Strip, from families working in the Egyptian interior, mainly in the

[4] The city is located in North-Eastern Egypt, directly on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It is the capital of the North Sinai Governorate. The Rafah border crossing to the Gaza Strip is located 50–60 km from here.
[5] A Bedouin town in Egypt's North Sinai Governorate, close to the border with the Gaza Strip. It is located between the cities of Al-Arish and Rafah, 334 kilometres northeast of Cairo.
[6] A Bedouin and agricultural town. It is the capital of Rafah centre in North Sinai Governorate. Rafah is the site of the Rafah Border Crossing, the sole crossing point between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.
[7] It is a well-known city in North Sinai, which has proved to be an important military base in the last ten years.

resort cities of Sharm al-Sheikh and Ras Muhammad in the southern Sinai, or from ethnic groups (such as Turks or Bosniaks) whose ancestors settled in the Ottoman period (Aziz, 2016. pp. 321–322; Sabry, 2015. p. 8).

In recent decades, this Bedouin population has been neglected by successive Egyptian central administrations. They have thus been disproportionately affected by social, political, and economic problems such as marginalisation, unemployment, poverty, repression, and displacement, despite the explosion of tourism in the southern coastal areas following the Israeli evacuation of the Sinai Peninsula in 1982 (Al-Monitor, 2014). Thus, the Cairo administration has converted hundreds of thousands of hectares of tribal land into agricultural land or tourist resorts, often with military protection (the so-called 'Red Sea Riviera'), in exchange for land in the interior of the peninsula, most of which is of much lower quality, for the former owners.

The loss of land also meant the loss of the livelihoods that were fundamental to their Bedouin identity. The disadvantages were exacerbated by the fact that employers of large investments tended to bring in workers from the Nile Valley, while most of the Bedouin who had given up their semi-nomadic way of life could barely make a living from activities such as fishing, hunting, wholesale, and retail trade, transporting goods or guiding tourists (Gilbert, 2013). Finally, there were the consequences of misgovernance, which not only added to the already existing grievances, but also further alienated the local people from the central leadership (Graham and Harrison, 2015).[8]

Moreover, Egyptian governments have long viewed the indigenous Bedouin population of the Sinai Peninsula as a security threat and treated them as second-class citizens. For example, most of them have been denied access to public and private sector jobs in politics, diplomacy, and the judiciary, and have been refused recruitment into the police or the armed forces (Dentice, 2018a). The main reason for this political exclusion and socio-economic-educational neglect is the suspicion that arose from the Bedouin's alleged collaboration with the Israelis after the Israeli occupation of the peninsula in 1967 (Bar'el, 2012). This was later compounded by the aforementioned discrimination against Bedouins in the labour market, which led to an increasing number of Bedouins earning a living from trafficking in human beings, arms and drugs (Gold, 2014).

In addition to - or rather instead of - the publicly voiced accusations, the semi-nomadic way of life of the Bedouin tribes and their desire to preserve their independence from central power are considered more significant. As they have never been fully integrated into Egyptian society, many of them do not even have Egyptian identity documents and their political representation has only been established in recent years. The tense relationship has been exacerbated when Egyptian governments have reacted to the problems that have arisen with harsh and sometimes heavy-handed

[8] Regarding the staged approach to the reform of territorial governance, see: Aboelnaga et al. 2019. pp. 193–194.

action, rather than identifying and tackling the root causes. The latter has led to a level of alienation among the local population that has greatly facilitated the growth in the size and expansion of militant groups in a geographically isolated region adjacent to regional conflicts.

The First two Waves of Egyptian Terrorism

Following the assassination of Egyptian President Sadat in October 1981, the Arab state experienced three distinct waves of terrorism. The first of these was clearly linked to the Mubarak regime, when armed actions by the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and especially al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group),[9] mainly in Cairo and the Delta, claimed hundreds of civilian lives. Although the biggest international response was perhaps the massacre in Luxor in 1997, which claimed 62 lives (Jehl, 1997), the lowest point for the latter was 1993, when 1,106 people were killed or injured in terrorist attacks. It was also striking that, during the same period, security forces suffered heavier losses than terrorists, who often carried out successful attacks in broad daylight against senior police officers and their escorts (Murphy, 2002. pp. 82-83).

The second period began after the start of the Western invasion of Iraq and was characterised primarily by attacks by the Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad (The Monotheism and Jihad Group)[10] in the Sinai Peninsula, which found a relatively easy following among young people from disaffected communities motivated by local grievances. The actions of Islamist militias have also claimed hundreds of lives in attacks such as those that took place in Taba and Ras Shaitan (Devil's Head) in 2004, in Sharm al-Sheikh in 2005, in Dahab in 2006 and in the South Sinai Governorate.

As the fundamentalist perpetrators of the first two waves included a significant proportion of Bedouins and Palestinians, the Egyptian security forces saw a more decisive action against the local population as the appropriate way to neutralise them. However, the arbitrary reprisals and unannounced raids carried out under the authority of Egypt's emergency law were an over-emotional, sometimes premature response rather than part of a strategy to prevent future attacks. As a result, the response strikes have had a counterproductive effect in further alienating civilians from central authority rather than intimidating and coercing cooperation. Thus, despite the arrest and often uncharged imprisonment of thousands, and the looting and destruction of their homes, which succeeded in ousting some extremist leaders, the more fanatical, the activists who remained free and the more radicalised civilians became as a result of the events, the

[9] Sunni Islamist movement in Egypt, which has been declared a terrorist organisation by the UK and the European Union. It committed serious assassinations and terrorist attacks in Egypt, mainly between 1992 and 1996.

[10] It was particularly active in Egypt and Iraq between 1999 and 2006. It was based in the Iraqi city of Fallujah.

more they confronted the regime's men in violation of tribal traditions and out of a desire for revenge (Awad and Hashem, 2015; Gold, 2014; Khalil, 2013).

However, the situation has become even more complex as a result of the *Arab Spring*,[11] with a re-dimensioning of the balance of power. After the Egyptian revolution in 2011, the social fault lines that had existed until then became even more polarised, while the Mubarak regime was accompanied by a breakdown of law and order in Sinai. The resulting security vacuum has led to the emergence of new terrorist organisations (such as Ansar al-Jihad and al-Qaeda in Sinai, the Muhammad Jamal Network, or Jund al-Islam) in the region, while the existing ones have become more radicalised in their ideology and methods. What all these groups had in common, however, was a closer or looser relationship with the international al-Qaeda network, a rejection of the authority of the Egyptian government, which they perceived as corrupt, and a jihad to create an Islamic state. Their circumstances were greatly facilitated by the fact that the resulting internal political instability further increased the susceptibility of citizens, already living below subsistence level and subject to discriminatory measures, to extremism, and they had little problem arming themselves from neighbouring, chaotic Libya or Sudan (Prantner, 2015).

As a result, *Operation Eagle*, launched on 14 August 2011, proved ineffective and was the most significant deployment of Egyptian armed forces in the Sinai since the 1973 Yom Kippur War (Katz, 2011). On 18 August 2011, just days after the launch of the military operation, Salafi jihadists carried out a series of strikes against Israeli targets along the Egyptian border on Highway 12. To make matters worse, in pursuit of the perpetrators, Israeli security forces, after entering Egyptian territory, also killed five Egyptian soldiers, leading to a diplomatic row between the two states[12] (Issacharoff, 2011). Attacks on gas pipelines in the Sinai Peninsula were also not prevented, with at least 15 bomb attacks between 2011 and July 2012 (Harb, 2012).

Even the electoral victory of the Islamist Morsi government failed to change the situation. Indeed, Morsi had already come to power with a small majority in a rather polarised political environment, with secular and liberal sections of society explicitly opposing the programme he had announced, while many revolutionary groups had rallied behind him simply because they considered him to be the "lesser evil" (Csicsmann, 2012. p. 118). Of particular importance was therefore the so-called Fairmont Accord signed on 22 June 2012 with key revolutionary actors, which gave the Muslim Brotherhood supporters and key opposition leaders a seat in the 'National Salvation Front' (Shukrallah, 2013).

[11] For more details on the Arab Spring in Egypt, see: N. Rózsa, 2015. pp. 122-127.

[12] The incident caused great outrage in Egypt. More than a thousand people demonstrated in front of the Israeli embassy in Cairo, where they demanded the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador. "Ahmed Al-Shahat", who was dubbed the "Egyptian Spider-Man" after his act, climbed to the top of the 15-story tower block that also houses the Israeli embassy, where he took down the Israeli flag and planted the Egyptian flag in its place.

However, an assessment of the events of the period suggests that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Morsi it supported entered into the agreement with other political movements for essentially tactical reasons, rather than out of sincere commitment. This was indicated by the Morsi cabinet's increasing disregard for the commitments made in the document after the victory, which, coupled with the expected lack of socio-economic development, turned the allied movements and activists into adversaries in a short period of time (Neszmélyi, 2018. pp. 114–115). This was compounded by a further deterioration in public security in the Sinai, where gunmen raided an Egyptian military base near Rafah on the border on 5 August 2012 and used the armoured vehicles, they had captured to enter Israeli territory (Zitun, 2012). In response, President Morsi replaced the defence minister with General al-Sisi. Operation Sinai was soon launched in close cooperation with the Israel Defense Forces to eliminate armed Islamist groups, protect the Suez Canal, and destroy the network of tunnels linking the Sinai Peninsula to the Gaza Strip, leading to a temporary calm in the area (Csicsmann, 2020. p. 73; Maher and Tarek, 2012).

However, the questionable enforcement of the November 2012 constitutional declaration,[13] adopted and announced by Morsi, has already reached a breaking point that has led to the eruption of nationwide protests. The spectacular display of social discontent then provided the final impetus for the army, dissatisfied with the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, to intervene and remove President Morsi from power in Egypt by staging a coup on 3 July 2013. Shortly after the ousting of the head of state, a wave of violence in the Sinai Peninsula erupted into unprecedented armed clashes, which were renewed in May 2013 following the kidnapping of an Egyptian officer (Eleiba, 2013).

The Current Wave of Terror

The third wave of terror, which is still ongoing today, was effectively triggered by the rise to power of General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Violence escalated shortly after the army's units bloodied peaceful demonstrations against a military coup (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Many members of the Muslim Brotherhood then became convinced that the only way to challenge the regime's policies was through the use of violence, and 'special operations committees' were set up in early 2014 to implement this (Awad, 2017). At the same time, the militias intensified their actions, arguing that the fall of Morsi had clearly demonstrated the legitimacy of their armed struggle against what they considered to be an oppressive state (Revkin, 2013). The Sisi regime adopted a much more aggressive strategy than before, officially declaring the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organisation at the end of 2013, and the security forces reverted to the methods used

[13] The document transferred almost all judicial powers to the president, who at that time already held both the legislative and the executive powers.

by the Mubarak regime, mainly in Sinai, despite the fact that their effectiveness was already clearly in question. However, the disregard for local political, social and economic conditions and the use of excessive force by the authorities, mass imprisonment and torture of some suspected terrorists have, if anything, further increased instability. Thus, although the number of people arrested and detained in 2011 on or in connection with terrorism charges rose from 16 to 3,600 in 2015, the number of attacks nevertheless multiplied: from the beginning of the year to mid-November 2015, the number of armed attacks in Sinai increased to 357, a tenfold increase compared to 2012. At the same time, the number of victims "only" increased fivefold, with the death toll rising from less than 50 in 2012 to more than 250 in 2015. Even more striking was the discrepancy in the number of casualties in counter-terrorism operations, which rose from 12 recorded in 2012 to more than 3,000 in 2015 (Aftandilian, 2015). A significant proportion of these operations were carried out by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis ('Supporters of the Holy House'), which has been active since 2011 in the northern Sinai Peninsula and pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014 under the name Wilayat Sinai (WS) (Kingsley, 2014).

The situation for the Egyptian security forces was made more difficult by the fact that the Islamic State was a role model not only for fundamentalists operating in the Sinai. The July 2015 bomb attack on the Italian consulate in downtown Cairo was the first time that the Islamic State made itself known in Egypt, and it has claimed responsibility for 19 other attacks in the Egyptian mainland as of May 2017, operating as a separate organisation from Wilayat Sinai (CBS News, 2015; Joscelyn, 2017).

In addition, the exclusion of Bedouin from the Egyptian armed and law enforcement forces in the Sinai Peninsula has also had the consequence of Bedouin being seen as outsiders to the security forces, depriving government forces of a wealth of valuable information (McGregor, 2016). This distrust was then made impossible by the aforementioned government strategy of viewing the Bedouin as essentially targets and not civilians to be protected. As a result, the brutal and spectacular executions of terrorists discouraged even the few Bedouins who would have been willing to cooperate in the face of any official protection. Conversely, the closure of border smuggling tunnels has made the livelihoods of many tribes impossible for lack of suitable economic alternatives, further increasing their anger towards the government and making some of them more receptive to terrorist recruitment (Graham and Harrison, 2015). Others, by contrast, have preferred to benefit from the militias, who have paid them to serve as guides and hide them from the security forces in the rugged terrain of Sinai (Awad and Hashem, 2015).

Another marked difference compared to the first two waves was the choice of targets. The attacks, which have become spectacularly more sophisticated, have now been predominantly directed against military and security facilities and state employees (e.g. police, soldiers, judges, politicians, etc.), mostly in cities in the northern Sinai (Medhat and King, 2017; BBC News, 2017a). Among the much more intense wave of

violence against individuals and institutions that embody the Egyptian state, the bomb attack by the Islamic State in Egypt on a building of the Egyptian internal security forces in the Shubra al-Kheima district of Qalyubia in 2015 stood out. August 20, 2015, which resulted in 29 people being injured (Ahram Online, 2015). attacks on fortified military checkpoints at Sheikh Zuweid and Al-Arish on 24 October 2015, or when a series of attacks, involving the active participation of some 300-500 militants, in an unprecedented manner and proportion, on more than 15 military and police posts simultaneously in July 2015, so violent and coordinated that the fundamentalists could only be forced to retreat by air power (Kirkpatrick, 2014; BBC News, 2015a).

The temporary capture of the town of Sheikh Zuweid, as well as the changes in tactics, methods and means used, and the high number of casualties, are the reasons why the post-2011 events in Sinai are increasingly described in the literature as a kind of insurgency (MEMO, 2020). At the same time, the undoubted manifestation of territorial ambitions was a reflection of the tactics used by the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. It is precisely the latter that has raised the terror threat to a higher level, as the armed struggle with the central power has now been spectacularly complemented by the terrorists' need for geographical visibility and identifiability.

For these reasons, the majority of Islamist armed groups have increasingly sought over time not to carry out indiscriminate attacks against local civilian targets, as they do not wish to collectively turn the civilian population against them. Indeed, Egyptian society is generally very tolerant, and the majority of Egyptians disapprove of attacks against their fellow citizens, regardless of religious affiliation (Grinberg and Sirgany, 2017). The clear decrease in terrorist attacks, however, did not mean that terrorists did not target civilians at all, but rather that they did. They regularly took victims in retaliation and/or as a deterrent, mainly among those suspected of collaborating with Egyptian army units. For example, Wilayat Sinai abducted 10 civilians in Amoriyah village on 17 March 2019, six of whom were later released. Weeks later, the terrorist group kidnapped another four civilians and massacred several others on the roadside, causing extreme terror. On 23 December 2020, three fishermen were taken to an unknown location. The extremist group has now claimed responsibility for the abduction and execution of 16-year-old Ahmed Faraj Suleiman Faraj al-Kiki, accused of collaborating with the security authorities (Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, 2021). Wilayat Sinai, notorious for its links with the security forces, kidnapped 14 members[14] of the al-Dawaghra tribe in April 2021, two of whom were later executed (Naguib, 2021).

However, the background to the attacks on the Coptic Christian community already showed some variation in the motivation of the terrorists. Wilayat Sinai, for example, carried out attacks against the community largely because of their perceived or real links with the Egyptian authorities, resulting in virtually all Christian families being forced to flee their homes in Sinai (Human Rights Watch, 2019). In contrast, the Islamic

[14] According to independent and opposition Arab media sources, it was 15 people.

State in Egypt, following Islamic State instructions, considered them a legal target simply because they were Christian and carried out several major suicide attacks or brutal raids against them, or their holy sites, despite the terror group's own "emir" acknowledging the backlash from the attacks and the resulting loss of popularity of jihadist ideology (also) within Egyptian society (Joscelyn, 2017).

The intensity of the terrorist attacks has been demonstrated by the fact that in less than a year, more than 100 Christians have been killed in attacks on Coptic churches, including the suicide bombing of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church in Cairo in December 2016, the simultaneous bombing in Alexandria and Tanta during Easter 2017, the massacre of 29 passengers on a bus to a monastery in central Egypt in May 2017, and the shooting at the St. Menas Coptic Church in Helwan in 2017. Finally, the gunmen did not shy away from the extreme use of violence against Muslims who they believed fell outside the rigid criteria set by the extremist religious views of the terrorist group.

The blatant terrorist attack that took place on 24 November 2017 at one of the largest Sufi affiliated al-Rawda mosques was a chilling testimony to this. In the bloodiest terrorist attack in Egypt's history, a group of around 40 assailants killed 311 people, including 27 children, and injured 128 others among Muslim worshippers gathered for Friday prayers (Egyptian Streets, 2017).

Egyptian fundamentalists have not completely abandoned their actions against foreign individuals and interests. If sporadic, terrorist attacks have continued against foreign ships crossing the Suez Canal, international observers, and foreign citizens and tourists. Among the latter, the incident of the Russian Metrojet Airbus A321-231, which crashed over the Sinai Peninsula on 31 October 2015 was a notable case (France 24, 2015). Two separate attacks in May 2022, which claimed at least 16 Egyptian soldiers as victims, were also a warning sign (Reuters, 2022). The militia raids took place on the eastern edge of the Suez Canal, raising questions about the Cairo government's ability to guarantee the safety and security of ships using the canal.

The Sisi Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Already in 2014, after taking the presidential oath of office, President Sisi made a clear commitment to a military solution to the terrorist threat (Saleh and Fick, 2014). Accordingly, the Egyptian armed forces conducted operations in the Sinai Peninsula to dismantle militant groups and drive out fundamentalists in Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid, Al-Arish and other Sinai cities, which could be divided into several main phases.

The first phase started as early as October 2014, when President Sisi declared a state of emergency in the northern half of the peninsula in response to the attacks of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis on 24 October, as mentioned above. Operations were then predominantly concentrated in the cities of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. The Egyptian

army sought to dismantle the activities of the militants there at the time by creating a 1,000-metre buffer zone along a 13.5-kilometre stretch of the Gaza-Rafah border by systematically cutting off basic services (such as water, electricity, internet, and mobile phone services), destroying some 1,500 homes and forcibly displacing more than 3,200 families (Kirkpatrick, 2015). However, despite the increased security measures, jihadist attacks continued, while support for the Egyptian army steadily declined due to the rising number of casualties from air and artillery strikes, and the deepening humanitarian crisis in some districts of Sheikh Zuwied and Rafah, which became more critical due to food and medicine shortages following the establishment of military checkpoints and the introduction of a curfew (Hashem, 2014; The New Arab, 2018; Wagoner, 2019. p. 7).

The second phase was launched on 3 September 2015, when Wilayat Sinai launched a missile attack against an Egyptian navy ship in the waters off the Gaza Strip city of Rafah (BBC News, 2015b). In retaliation, the Egyptian armed forces launched a comprehensive military operation dubbed 'Martyrs' Law' four days later to identify and neutralise the terrorists (Eleiba, 2015). However, the deployment of Egyptian soldiers only further escalated the belligerence of Wilayat Sinai, which became even more determined to attack members of the army and security forces. Thus, although Egyptian security forces have managed to eliminate hundreds of terrorists, including Abu Duaa al-Ansary himself, the commander of Wilayat Sinai, the terrorist organisation has proven capable of constant renewal with the emergence of new leaders and the replacement of lost members. Its ability to remain effective was demonstrated by the fact that in the autumn of 2017 alone, hundreds of people were killed in attacks such as the one that took place in September in the northern Sinai town of Al-Arish (18 policemen killed) (Sakr, 2017), in October in and around the town of Sheikh Zuweid (at least six soldiers killed) (Al-Jazeera, 2017), and in the bank robbery in Al-Aris (8 dead, 17 million Egyptian pounds[15] in loot) (Al-Monitor, 2017), or the massacre at the Al-Rawda mosque mentioned above. The latter, in particular, highlighted the fact that, as a de facto result of the military operations, the gradual expansion of the terrorist organisation's radius of action had already begun at that time, as its operational area from the northern part of the peninsula gradually expanded to the western parts of the region. This trend was even more pronounced in the third wave, with one of the most recent attacks taking place in Ismailia against a police checkpoint in late December 2022 (Al-Jazeera, 2022).

The failure of the first two phases to produce the expected decisive breakthrough led the Egyptian leadership to change its tactics by launching the third phase, dubbed 'Operation Sinai 2018', in early February 2018 to retaliate against the attack on al-Rawda Mosque just a few months earlier. The scope of the new, comprehensive military campaign extended beyond Sinai to the Nile and Delta valleys and the Western Desert. In addition to ground forces, navy and air force, police and border guard units were

[15] At the time of the bank robbery, the exchange rate of 1 US dollar was equal to 17.6 Egyptian pounds.

also involved in the combined operations. The scale of the counter-terrorism operations was further illustrated by the fact that the Egyptian government, with Israel's approval, more than doubled the number of its military forces in the Sinai Peninsula in just one year, with 88 battalions and 42,000 troops deployed in 2018 (Bassist, 2021).

However, in parallel to the military operations, the Sisi government has already sought cooperation with local tribal leaders, several of whom have been successfully involved in the fighting on its side under the auspices of the Sinai Tribal Alliance (Al-Monitor, 2020). However, the Sinai presence of fundamentalists has not been completely eradicated. The tribal groups in the alliance have sometimes fiercely competed with each other for greater influence, as well as for greater logistical support and the acquisition of modern equipment. The tribes, often with different interests and potential, therefore sought to establish and maintain their own lines of communication with the army, while exercising exclusive control over their territories and not allowing any armed men from other tribes to enter. All this made it extremely difficult for the allied tribes to coordinate their operations effectively (Al-Monitor, 2022).

This division and the decline of the Egyptian army's presence in Sinai was the main reason why, despite the heavy losses suffered, Wilayat Sinai's effectiveness continued to increase over time. This was demonstrated by, among other things, the expansion of the terrorist organisation's operational radius, the sophistication of the weapons it deployed and the increasing sophistication of the tactics it employed. In addition, successful attacks on high-priority, highly protected targets have also demonstrated their ability to infiltrate the Egyptian armed forces, where they have been able to obtain highly sensitive information and use it for their own purposes. This was the case, for example, with the most recent bomb attack in November 2022 that killed, along with three members of a pro-government Bedouin militia, Lieutenant Colonel Assem Mohamed Essameldin, leader of the 103rd Thunderbolt Battalion, one of the most famous units of the Egyptian Special Forces. It was particularly thought-provoking that Essameldin was the third commander of this counter-terrorism unit to be assassinated by fundamentalists in less than six years (Naguib, 2022).

All of these factors have combined to enable terrorists to move, in less than a decade and a half, from explosive and suicide attacks against urban soft targets with improvised explosive devices to a kind of structured low-medium level insurgency, in which the fight is now predominantly directed against hard targets with rockets and heavy weapons (Ashour, 2015). The guerrilla warfare with mobile units, based on 'hit and run' tactics, also highlighted the inability of the Egyptian military leadership to completely break away from traditional warfare. Strategic decision making remains largely based in Cairo, while there is a lack of a joint special operations command capable of dynamic response and autonomous mission execution in the areas most exposed to terrorist threats (McManus, 2020). The lack of a more flexible chain of command, the necessary experience, and the willingness/readiness to adapt may have led to an asymmetric fight against terrorists at a very high cost to the security forces,

despite their vast superiority. The latter was well illustrated by President Sisi's admission that in the nearly nine years since he came to power in 2013, more than 3,000 military and police personnel have lost their lives, more than 12,000 soldiers have suffered permanent injuries that have prevented them from returning to active duty, and the amount of money spent by the army to eradicate terrorism has exceeded 80 billion Egyptian pounds (Hendawi, 2022).

Impacts and Consequences of the Terrorist Threat

The instability, particularly in the Sinai Peninsula, has had negative social and economic consequences at national level. If we add to this the global events and processes (such as the Covid-19 epidemic or the Russian-Ukrainian war) that have recently hit Egypt, the urgency of finding a calming solution to the security and economic situation as soon as possible becomes clear.

In the short term, the first and most obvious consequences of the current terrorism are reflected in the destruction of property, the cost of repairing/rebuilding damaged buildings and infrastructure, the lack of investment in areas at risk of terrorist attacks, the loss of life in the labour market, etc, in the cost of treating the injured and providing long-term care for the permanently injured, in the outflow of labour and the increase in unemployment, or in the horrendous expenditure by the government on the operation and development of state agencies for the prevention of terrorist acts.

These aspects are almost universal to all regions affected by terrorism. In the case of Egypt, on the other hand, the impact on the tourism sector has a number of specific characteristics. As mentioned earlier, Moscow imposed a ban on direct charter flights to and from Egyptian tourist destinations after the Russian Metrojet Airbus A321-231 crashed over the Sinai Peninsula on 31 October 2015 with 224 people on board after take-off from Sharm al-Sheikh (France 24, 2015). Its example was followed by several European countries, causing the country's tourism revenues to fall by almost 50% to just under $3.8 billion in 2016 (Trading Economics, n. d.).[16] In the following years, there has been spectacular progress in this area thanks to security improvements at Egyptian airports and the voluntary devaluation of the Egyptian pound,[17] which has made holidays in Egypt much cheaper for foreigners. However, the full recovery of the sector was set back first by the Cairo attacks in 2019 and then again by the pandemic and the outbreak of the Russian-Ukrainian war. In the wake of these events, the need to avert

[16] The decline is even more significant if we consider that in 2010, around 14 million foreign tourists visited the country, which at that time represented a revenue of USD 12.5 billion (13% of GDP) for the Egyptian economy (Neszmélyi, 2019. p. 4.).

[17] The devaluation of the Egyptian pound is illustrated by the fact that while 1 US dollar was worth 7.83 Egyptian pounds at the beginning of 2016, a year later it was worth 18.9 Egyptian pounds. The Egyptian currency then fluctuated between 18.050 and 15.3 until the beginning of 2022, when it plummeted again. Currently, 1 US dollar is equivalent to 30.850 Egyptian pounds.

possible terrorist attacks has become a priority, given the sector's significant contribution to the country's GDP. A major attack on a single new tourist destination would almost certainly aggravate the already unfavourable situation of the sector, reducing the country's foreign exchange reserves, making it more difficult to recover and increasing unemployment.

In addition to tourism, particular attention should be paid to protecting shipping traffic through the Suez Canal. Any attack here would also have a negative impact on the country's economy. Indeed, the loss of foreign ships would significantly reduce revenues from canal tolls, which, for example, amounted to $704 million in July 2022 alone, thanks to a significant boom in transit traffic for various types of vessels (Egypt Independent, 2022).

The fight against terrorism can also have several important political consequences. As we have pointed out before, President Sisi has made a strong commitment to eradicate terrorism by armed force, so failure to achieve decisive results could call into question both his personal charisma and his promises in the minds of many Egyptians. Discontent against his person may be fuelled by the fact that, instead of resounding successes, there has been a reduction in civil society and personal freedoms, and a narrowing of political space. Thus, counter-terrorism measures have effectively blurred the lines between fundamentalist militants and the broader political opposition, with thousands of perceived or real members of the Muslim Brotherhood imprisoned for invoking them, while journalists and bloggers have been detained for criticising government policies and civil rights activists for demanding freedoms and organising riots/demonstrations (Khalifa, 2017). This has given rise to theories that, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood's repression and the protracted fight against terrorism actually serve the political interests of the Cairo leadership by helping to increase support for the current political establishment among non-Islamist members of society who increasingly see President Sisi as a defender of the regime (Hassan-Mattingly-Nugent, 2022. They can also divert public attention from the atrocities and failures of structural reform and help build a sense of national unity among disaffected Egyptians by amplifying nationalist rhetoric (Dentice, 2018b). Other theories argue that President Sisi is using the fight against terrorism to reinforce his international legitimacy and maintain foreign aid by portraying himself as a key player in preserving regional stability (Al-Anani, 2023).

The Egyptian president's statement in January 2023 that he had succeeded in completely eliminating the terrorist presence in the North Sinai Governorate should also be treated with caution (El-Din, 2023). In fact, there have been no major incidents in the conflict-ridden northern zones, which are at risk of intense armed clashes since August 2022. However, this does not mean that there have not been more incidents in other parts of the peninsula. The armed raid on a military vehicle in St. Catherine, South Sinai, on 27 February 2023, clearly showed that the militia groups had at best only been

pushed out of their former stomping grounds, but that there was no sign of a definitive victory over them (Mada Masr, 2023).

The persistence of Wilayat Sinai may encourage other terrorist groups operating on the Egyptian mainland to continue their own activities. The latter include the other IS affiliates mentioned above, as well as groups such as the IS group, which was formed in 2014 and expanded in 2015. Ajnad Misr ("Soldiers of Egypt"), formed in 2015 and inactive since early August 2016, the Allied Popular Resistance Movement, formed in 2015 and active until August 2016, and Liwaa al-Thawra, formed in 2016 in the Menoufiya and Qalubiya governorates north of Cairo, or Hasm in Cairo, Fayoum governorate and Upper Egypt, which may be composed of younger ex-members of the Muslim Brotherhood who disagreed with the non-violence policies of their elders. These extremist groups primarily campaigned against the regime, thus predominantly targeting those who embodied/symbolized it - government officials and police officers - and did not select their victims because of their religious or ideological beliefs. The Hasm's determination in this area was illustrated, among others, by the assassination attempts in 2016 alone against former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa, Deputy Attorney General Zakaria Abdel Aziz, and Judge Ahmed Aboul Fotouh, who was one of the judges who sentenced Islamist ex-president Morsi to 20 years in prison (El-Gundy, 2018; Ouf, 2017; Reuters, 2016). And his resilience was spectacularly demonstrated when his supporters killed at least 55 police officers in an oasis town some 80 miles southwest of Cairo when authorities raided their hideout on 20 October 2017 (Raghavan and Mahfouz, 2017).

Conclusion

The results of the fight against terrorism in Egypt can be assessed as effective, but not decisive, based on the experience of recent years. Although the number of terrorist attacks has clearly decreased in recent years, terrorist organisations have nevertheless managed not only to maintain but even to increase their operational capabilities. In fact, even this increased potential is not sufficient to overthrow the Cairo leadership, as the majority of society rejects fundamentalism, and the security services remain very strong. However, the terrorists' very ability to carry out sustained attacks can create adverse conditions that could make it extremely difficult, for example, to recover the country's critically strained economy. The reconstruction and development projects that the Egyptian state has announced and implemented since 2014, totalling some 610 billion Egyptian pounds, to connect the Sinai Peninsula with the hinterland of the Suez Canal, improve infrastructure and improve living conditions, are therefore exceptionally significant.

One of the biggest flaws in the Cairo government's security-oriented strategy since 2013 is that it is fundamentally short-term in its focus on "only" achieving quick and spectacular successes over terrorists. As a result, as a kind of symptomatic treatment,

it is essentially limited to preventing terrorist acts and containing insurgency, rather than seeking substantive solutions to the root causes. Thus, instead of unilateral, mainly reactive military responses - i.e., counter-terrorism raids and tracking down fundamentalists - it would be essential to see the state as a partner rather than an adversary by stopping abuses, ensuring decent living conditions and giving local populations greater political freedom, which would provide an excellent opportunity to deprive extremists of the possibility of recruiting new activists. This, however, makes it essential to implement a fundamental paradigm shift from a security-focused fight against terrorism to a development-focused strategy to address economic, social and economic problems.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

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Egypt's Geopolitical Alignment via the Digital Humanities[1]

Elizabeth Bishop[2]

Abstract:

The Egyptian civilization is a monumental pillar of the modern history of humanity and contributes greatly to the increase of current knowledge. Together, Ali M. Yahya's Egypt and the Soviet Union, 1955-1972 (1989) and Rami Ginat's The Soviet Union and Egypt, 1945-1955 (1993) established a chronology which enable a discussion of this influential Arab country's past in terms of its present; this intervention tests a variety of methods from the "digital humanities" as an e-learning technology. Clearly, the events which occurred during 1955 were sufficient to accomplish Egypt's geopolitical alignment; seeking to explore Yahya's and Ginat's established chronology, this intervention uses new research and analytic techniques in an attempt to identify specific aspects of historical experience of Egypt's geopolitical realignment during the pivotal year 1955, which (among other developments) introduced the Aswan High Dam as a new focal point for water issues, regional rivalries and conflicts over the control of natural resources.

Keywords:
Cairo, Cold War, Databases, Moscow, Nasser, Nehru

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Introduction

In his recent work, Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder states: "we need to understand the structure, content, purpose, and effect of… geoconstructivist discourses and sound an alarm about their deliberative directions," adding "we need to make clear how geoengineering proponents intuitionally and unintentionally marshal other geological actors into their arguments;" having said that, a cursory glance at the book fails to yield evidence that he consulted historical records from the period of Egypt's geopolitical realignment (Pflugfelder 2022). The issue of Egypt's realignment during 1955 is currently at the center of popular and academic discussions: reflecting on that moment, El Dabaa Nuclear Power Plant is referred to as both "the largest project of Russian-Egyptian co-operation since the Aswan Dam construction," and "the first nuclear power plant built on the African continent using the Russian technology," which is how Moscow's state company Rosatom describes this cooperative venture (Mills 2023). For his part, Amgad Al-Wakil (chair of Egypt's Nuclear Power Plants Authority, NPPA), said the nuclear power plant in Al-Dabaa on Egypt's northern coast represents the largest joint project between Egypt and Russia since the construction of the Aswan High Dam under the regime of late president Gamal Abdel-Nasser in the 1960s (Essam El-Din 2023). The current intervention test Pflugfelder's statement and subsequent assertions by means of comparison deriving from the empirical basis of contributions to Jeff Karam and Andreas Hilger's workshop the "Arab-Soviet Internationalism – Socialist Internationalism, International Organizations and the Politics of Revolution in the 20th and 21st Centuries" which convened in Berlin (July 2022). Together, Ali M. Yahya's Egypt and the Soviet Union, 1955-1972 (1989) and Rami Ginat's *The Soviet Union and Egypt, 1945-1955* (1993) established a chronology for this structured research. While Ali M. Yahya titles the first chapter of the book, "Goals of Egyptian Foreign Policy," Rami Ginat titles the second half of the book, "The Beginning of Soviet Involvement in Egyptian Affairs," breaking the overall argument into two aspects: first steps, and Soviet response to western attempts to form a Middle East defense organization. Analytically, the distinction between the region's affairs before 1955, and after that date is matched by the distinction between Egyptian goals and Soviet involvement, between foreign policy and domestic affairs. The current intervention addresses these neglected aspects.

Materials and Methods

The "digital humanities" are an area of scholarly activity at the intersection of computing or digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities, which includes both the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, and analysis of their application; having said that, the "digital humanities" are rooted in social science research methods as well. While the study of history is considered a part of the humanities, it is also classified as a social science. On behalf of the American Historical Association, Douglas Seefeldt and William G. Thomas assessed "digital history" to be at the center of a "whole

new field" which opened up "as historians tried to experiment with the new medium;" the present intervention testing Pflugfelder's assertion can be considered just such an experiment (Seefeldt and Thomas, 2009b).

When they were writing, Seefeldt and Thomas considered this field to be very much in flux: "because the medium is still so new in comparison to traditional modes of communication, and the technology is still rapidly changing, we historians have only just begun to explore what history looks like in the digital medium" even in the absence of well-defined examples of digital scholarship, established best practices, and, especially, and clear standards (Seefeldt and Thomas 2009b). Given Seefeldt's and Thomas's concerns, the current intervention should be considered an essay in digital methodologies available to historians who are interested in Egypt's geopolitical alignment of 1955.

Digital Sources

Let us begin an historically based conversation with Pflugfelder's assertions and the sources from which they were derived, with digital sources of government records and other documents, which were widely-used during the Covid-19 pandemic, and finally addressing AI analytic tools at the conclusion of this intervention. For the purposes of this analysis, internet-based documentation will be considered half of the materials and methods of "digital humanities." For example, the U.S. National Archives' website contains answers to preliminary research-related questions regarding the location of Federal records on the website, including such resources as an internet-based database to numbered microfilms created by or purchased by the U.S. National Archives for researchers' use, a crowdsourced platform ("History Hub"), an Access to Archival Databases (AAD) search engine into electronic records' holdings.

Pflugfelder does not cite documents from "bricks and mortar" archives, which turns this conversation to digital sources. It's important to recognize that "the archive" is not universal. Several historians are preparing to meet for a conference at the American University in Cairo, co-sponsored by the CEDEJ and the IFAO, which addressed "Impossible Archives? Rewriting the Contemporary in Egypt" (3 July 2023). Founded in Cairo during 1828, the National Archives (which are currently two facilities) are among the world's oldest. The Ministry of Culture maintains *Dar al-Watha'iq* (under Law no. 356 of 1954) as an official repository for government ministries' documentation, excepting documentation from the "sovereign ministries" of Defense and the Interior. In addition, the Ministry of Finance maintains a separate facility *Dar al-Mahfuzat 'al-'Umumiyya* as an active government office: for this reason, there is no public catalog nor is there a website for reference (Byrne 2020). In addition, East View Information Service's *Al-Ahram Digital Archive* database is not currently available to me (also Bar-Noi, n.d.)

In the Russian Federation, each of the federal archives under the "Rosarkhiv" agency has its own website: among many others, these include Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GA RF) [State Archive of the Russian Federation], the Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA) [Russian State Archive of Early Acts], and the Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv (RGIA) [Russian State Historical Archive] (ArcheoBiblioBase, n. d.). In addition to Moscow, other capitals successor jurisdictions to the Soviet Union (Alma-Ata, Ashkhabad, Baku, Dushanbe, Frunze, Kiev, Kishinev, Minsk, Riga, Tallinn, Tashkent, Tbilisi, Vilnius and Yerevan) are home to national archives. As just one example, Kazakhstan is home to five central and 15 state archives; as of July 1, 2012, the total number of items stored in Kazakhstan archives is more than 20 million (files and documents; Open Archives, [2019]).

Seeking to answer Seefeldt and Thomas' question, "so, what is digital history and how should we understand its characteristics?" the current intervention recognizes that the survival of documentation offers yet another differential form of privilege, then compares three digital sources of documents pertaining to Egypt's geopolitical alignment: Adam Matthew's Archives Direct "Confidential Print: Middle East, 1839-1969" commercial product providing remote access to documents from the U.K. Foreign Office, the ProQuest "Historical Newspapers" commercial product, and (finally) the U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). These three are available to students, staff, and faculty at Texas State University through the Online Resource Grant program.

U.K. Foreign Office

The U. K. National Archives include record group "FO," which refers to records created or inherited by the U.K. Foreign Office. The "Confidential Print" series within the "FO" record group consists of 421 volumes (extending from 1839 until 1973); this series has been digitized and is available commercially. Within the "Confidential Print" series, records within a subseries are variously titled "Correspondence respecting Egypt and the Sudan" and "Further Correspondence respecting Egypt and the Sudan" (1947-1949), as well as "Correspondence Respecting Egypt" (1950-1956). None are cited in Pflugfelder's excellent work. Ten records within the subseries were surveyed for reference to "Moscow" and/or the "Soviet Union;" these were FO 407/226 until FO 407/235. Given that the scanned files include both "Correspondence" and "Supplements," the following figures are inclusive:

Table 1: Foreign Office records	
FO 407/226	210 scanned pages (representing 420 printed pages)
FO 407/227	45 scanned pages (90 printed)
FO 407/228	158 scanned (158 printed)
FO 407/229	72 scanned (144 printed)
FO 407/230	82 scanned (164 printed)

FO 407/231	73 scanned (146 printed)
FO 407/232	69 scanned (138 printed)
FO 407/233	94 scanned (188 printed)
FO 407/234	51 scanned (102 printed)
FO 407/235	316 scanned (632 printed)

A long-standing debate seeks to justify U.K. Foreign Office documentation until 1955 as a source for the history of modern Egypt. For example, in The Ends of British Imperialism (2006), Wm. Roger Louis suggests that the manipulation or intervention in Egyptian politics of His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to Egypt and the Sudan Sir Miles Lampson (1936-1946) served to indicate a lapse of British diplomatic expertise (Whidden 2017). At several points in the Oxford History of the British Empire (1999, including vol. IV) Louis makes the point that it was the Foreign Office's policy to encourage Arab nationalism.

Sir Ralph Stevenson served as Ambassador during this key period of Egypt's geopolitical realignment (1950-1955). Appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to His Majesty the King of Yugoslavia during 1943, Stevenson held that post until 1946. He was the British Ambassador to China from 1946 to 1950, serving as Her Britannic Majesty's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Egypt from 1950 to 1953 and later to the Republic of Egypt from 1953 to 1955. The Papers of Sir Ralph Claremont Skrine Stevenson (1895-1977) are held in the Manx National Heritage Library and Archives as reference IM 147 MS 10859.

ProQuest "Historical Newspapers"

Several citations in Pflugfelder's excellent work derive from the ProQuest "Historical Newspapers" database; for this reason, the database was searched for items containing both the geonyms "Cairo" and "Moscow." In addition to four government archives of the Russian Federation, Elena Zubkova's Russia After the War (1998) includes numerous citations to periodical press of the U.S.S.R., which turns the attention of a researcher based at a university in the United States to the "Historical Newspapers" database which serves as a digital equivalent to the printed Russkaia periodicheskaia pechat'.

Texas State University's Alkek Library's collections of databases include ProQuest "Historical Newspapers." With more than 60 premier historical titles (including the *Wall Street Journal*), every issue of each title includes the complete paper, cover-to-cover, with full-page and article images in easily downloadable PDF format. The "Historical Newspapers" archive contains more than 52 million digitized pages, enabling researchers to study articles, photos, advertisements, classified ads, obituaries, and editorial cartoons. According to Paivi Rentz (head acquisitions librarian, Alkek Library), "'Requests' involve the retrieval or viewing of the full text of content, and an

'Investigation' is an action that is related to the content in some way, for example an abstract view or full-text view;" that over a period of time, members of the university's research community placed 563 "requests" of the *Wall Street Journal*, and 583 "investigations" of the same newspaper.[3]

For the single year 1955, thirty items meet search criteria for the current research: one from January, four from February (none from March, April, or May), four from June, one from July, two each from August and September, nine from October, one from November, and four from December. Compared with the U.K. Foreign Office records, the digitized ProQuest "Historical Newspapers" database would initially appear to be a less strong source for information regarding Egypt's geopolitical alignment during 1955.

U.S. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)

President Roosevelt created a Foreign Broadcast Monitoring Service (FBMS) under the authority of the Federal Communications Commission on 26 February 1941 to monitor, translate, and disseminate openly available news and information from media sources outside the United States within the U.S. government. When President Harry S. Truman created the Central Intelligence Group under the direction of a Director of Central Intelligence by presidential directive on January 22, 1946, the re-named Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) became an open source intelligence component of the Central Intelligence Agency's Directorate of Science and Technology; after which the National Security Act of 1947 gave rise to a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and FBIS was transferred to it.

While Pflugfelder's references do not extend to FBIS, its institutional history underscores the potential of FBIS to inform the current research. The database was searched twice for the current research: once, for broadcasts from the Soviet Union containing the word "Cairo;" and a second time for broadcasts from Egypt containing the word "Moscow." During 1955, Cairo-based radio stations (including Radio Cairo home service in Arabic, Radio Cairo broadcasting to Latin America in Arabic, and Radio Cairo's "Voice of the Arabs" programming to the Arab world in Arabic) mentioned "Moscow" 18 times. The same year, Moscow-based radio stations (including the Soviet European service in [Russian] *Hellschreiber*, Soviet European service in French, Soviet home service in Russian, Soviet Near Eastern Service in Arabic, Soviet Near Eastern Service in Turkish, Soviet North American service in English, and the Soviet United Kingdom service in English, as well as the *TASS* Russian News Agency) mentioned "Cairo" 33 times.

[3] Personal communications (1 January 2021, 29 February 2023).

Results

The results of this interrogation of Pflugfelder's work are presented as both "preliminary" and "conclusive." Preliminary analysis results derive from ChatGPT is an artificial-intelligence (AI) chatbot developed by OpenAI and launched in November 2022. Preliminary results are derived from ChatGPT which is a sibling model to InstructGPT (trained to follow an instruction in a prompt and provide a detailed response). Conclusive analysis results are derived from conventional forms of historical analysis (to be continued below, under "discussion")

Confidential Print

Each sub-series of the Foreign Office "Confidential Print" includes a "subject index." Even though Pflugfelder does not cite the "Confidential Print" series, the "subject index" to FO 407/227 references "communism in Egypt," that to FO 407/231 references "Liberation Square," and that to FO 407/233 addresses "communism in Egypt" as well. The "subject index" to FO 407/234 addresses "Arms Deal between Egypt and Czechoslovakia," "Arms Supply for Egypt," "High Aswan Dam," and finally "Soviet Arms for Egypt." Finally, the "subject index" to FO 407/235 acknowledges the "Aswan High Dam," "Egyptian Constitution, The New," "Egyptian Labor and Social Affairs," "Evacuation Celebrations in Egypt" acknowledged the visit of M. Shepilov; the "Liberation Province Development Schemes," "Nationalization of the Suez Canal," "Soviet Bloc Activities in Egypt," and, finally, "Soviet Egyptian Labor Relations."

Sir Ronald Campbell's report, "Communism in Egypt" (19 March 1948) was directed to Ernest Bevin. Of the report's nine paragraphs, one is pertinent to this project: "An interesting point in the policy of the Communists is the encouragement of and co-operation with nationalist sentiment. Mr. Adolf Berle, who, when Assistant Under Secretary in the United States Department of State interested himself in Communist activity in the American continent, told me in 1942 or 1943 that the feature of this activity in Latin American countries was that it had begun to work, though the nationalist section of opinion in each. He thought the object of this was to create for the post-war period a sentiment friendly to Russia amongst those posing as putting up a patriotic resistance to the 'imperialism' of the United States. It is rather early yet to hazard an opinion, whether the nationalist aspect of Communist activity in Egypt is likely to result in the production of pro-Russian feeling among the masses and whether, if it did, the politicians would feel tempted or bound to follow such sentiment in their foreign policy" (FO 407/227, "Communism in Egypt," pp. 18-19).

Sir Ralph Stevenson's report, "Developments in the Organization of the 'Liberation Squads' in Egypt" (18 December 1951) was directed to Anthony Eden. Of the report's seven paragraphs, one is pertinent: "Towards the end of November the police appear to have raided a depot of the Socialist Party squads, although accounts differ

whether this was at a place in Cairo or in Sharkiya province some fifty miles from the capital. It seems certain, however, that a raid of some kind took place. It may have been intended to blackmail the squads into accepting Government control, but it was nicely calculated to destroy any confidence in the Government's intentions which the leaders of squads may have felt. In consequence of such Government actions one of the effects of their assumption of control has been the opposite of what they had intended" (FO 407/231, "Developments," pp. 1-2; see also "Telegram from Sir R. Stevenson to Foreign Office, May 13, 1952").

Sir Ralph Stevenson's report, "Communism in Egypt" (8 July 1954) was directed to Mr. Anthony Eden. Of the report's thirteen paragraphs, one is pertinent, regarding: "the loose use locally of the term 'communist.' As under former Governments, so under the present regime, any person holding progressive virtues is apt (if he belongs to the Opposition) to be accused of Communism. Comparatively few of those who are active in the local Communist groups would in all probability qualify for membership in the Communist Parties of Europe. Nevertheless, progressive or frustrated elements who look for inspiration to the leaders of political thought in Moscow rather than, or in addition to, the Socialists of Western Europe, and who consort with member of the self-styled Communist groups in the country, constitute a considerable, if ill-defined, body of people" (FO 407/233, "Communism in Egypt," pp. 80-82).

FO 407/234 addresses "Arms Deal between Egypt and Czechoslovakia," "Arms Supply for Egypt," "High Aswan Dam," and finally "Soviet Arms for Egypt." Sir Humphrey Trevalyn's report, "Soviet Arms for Egypt" (6 September 1955) was directed to Mr. Macmillan. Of the report's five paragraphs, a section of one is pertinent: "The Russians offered [Nasser] arms in the spring when resentment at the Turco-Iraqi Pact was at its height and the impact of neutralist influences at Bandung fresh. But he refused and intensified his efforts to get arms from the Americans, ourselves, and the French. He did a deal with the French in June, probably in return for a promise to cease attacks against the French in Morocco [sic] and assistance to Moroccan [sic] rebels, but the French have now refused deliveries on the ground that the Pact is broken. He sent emissaries to England, but got nothing out of his new requests. He came up against payment difficulties with the Americans and finally indicate d to them that he could wait no longer in the face of pressure from the Army on which the regime is completely dependent" (FO 407/234, "Soviet Arms for Egypt," [p. 14]).

Harold Macmillan's minute, "Conversation in New York between the Secretary of State and Mr. Fawzi" (30 September 1955) was directed to Sir Humphrey Trevelyan. Of the minute's seven paragraphs, a section of one is pertinent to this project: "with regard to the question of arms for Egypt, he said that the incidents which had so much disturbed us were very regrettable. He used this expression twice. He said it had all grown out of a misunderstanding. He did not think it was worth while having any recrimination about the past. He thought we should sit down together and work out the precise position. The situation is still fluid… he proceeded to say that nobody had

less desire than his government to have Russian or Communist influence in Egypt, Africa, or Asia…" (FO 407/234, "Conversation," pp. 62-63).

Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's report, "Egyptian-Czech Arms Deal" (24 October 1955) was directed to Harold Macmillan. Of the report's ten paragraphs, a section of one is pertinent to this project: "In June the Egyptians seem to have started to think seriously of negotiations with the Communists. According to a report from the Jordanian Military Attaché in Cairo which was heard of in Amman in the middle of June, the Egyptians had declared that in four months' time the Gaza situation would be changed by the delivery of heavy equipment from Czechoslovakia…" (FO 407/234, "Arms Deal," pp. 67-69). Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's brief note, "High Aswan Dam" (24 November 1955) was directed to Mr. Macmillan. Of the report's two paragraphs, one is pertinent to this project: "According to to-day's press, Production Minister Hassan Ibrahim told reporters after last night's Cabinet meeting that Egyptian Government was keen to sign contracts in July 1956 with the firms which would build the High Dam so that work might start in July 1957" (FO 407/234, "High Aswan Dam," p. 76).

FO 407/235 acknowledges the "Aswan High Dam," "Egyptian Constitution, The New," "Egyptian Labor and Social Affairs," "Evacuation Celebrations in Egypt" acknowledged the visit of M. Shepilov; "Soviet Bloc Activities in Egypt," and, finally, "Soviet Egyptian Labor Relations." In "Egypt: Annual Review for 1955" directed to Mr. Macmillan, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan referred to "Evacuation Celebrations" (31 January 1956). Of the report's nine paragraphs, part of one is pertinent: "in 1955 the Communists started a drive in the Middle East. Footballers, third-rate dancers, and VOKS [the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries of the U.S.S.R.] have been in evidence in Egypt, but the real bait is arms, economic and technical aid and the assurance that Egypt can dispose of large quantities of her staple produce through barter agreements with the communist world. The supply of arms to Egypt was a major communist victory, which must give them increasing influence in the country unless there is a settlement with Israel…" (FO 407/235, "Egypt," pp. 1-5).

Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's report, "Egyptian Constitution, The New" (2 February 1956) was directed to Selwyn Lloyd. Of the report's twenty paragraphs, part of one is pertinent: "Nasser has on numerous occasions described himself as a socialist and it has been natural to wonder whether he and his colleagues, with their basic inexperience and limited capabilities for critical analysis, might not have fallen prey to the misuse of language and perversion of terminology in which the Communists are expert. If, however, his Constitution and his public utterances leading up to it are any guide, it seems clear that he means no more than he says. Not even the word 'socialism' figures in the text of the Constitution…" (FO 407/235, "Egyptian Constitution," pp. 9-14).

Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's brief note, "High Aswan Dam" (10 February 1956) was directed to Selwyn Lloyd. The text's single paragraph is a statement Eugene Black and "the Egyptians" issued, which includes the following: "During the past two weeks

representatives of the Government of Egypt and Mr. Eugene Black, President of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, have been discussing the participation of the Bank in the financing of the High Dam project. These discussions have been very fruitful and have resulted in mutual understanding, for a substantial agreement has been reached covering the basis of the Bank's participation necessary for the financing of the foreign exchange cost of the High Dam project for an amount equivalent to 200 million dollars…" (FO 407/235, "High Aswan Dam," p. 15).

Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's brief note, "Egyptian Labor and Social Affairs" (4 April 1956) was directed to Selwyn Lloyd. Of the report's five paragraphs, part of one is pertinent to this project: "The most noteworthy feature of the period under review has been the continued growth of the trade union movement. Although precise figures are wanting, both the number of unions and the size of their membership have increased considerably. Union leaders, who at present and probably for some time to come, rule their members rather than represent them clearly relish the increasing prominence given them by the regime during the past two years…" (FO 407/235, "Egyptian Labor," pp. 43-44). Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's report, "Soviet Bloc Activities in Egypt" (19 April 1956) was directed to Selwyn Lloyd. Of the report's fifteen paragraphs, part of one referring to the U.S.S.R. is pertinent to this project: "their decision to allot a higher priority to Middle Eastern matters and to embark on a wide initiative in all these fields may be seen, in retrospect, to have been marked by a declaration of policy issued by the Soviet Foreign Ministry on the 16th of April 1955" (FO 407/235, "Soviet Bloc," pp. 45-48).

Sir Humphrey Trevelyan's brief note, "Soviet Egyptian Labor Relations" (17 May 1956) was directed to Selwyn Lloyd. Of the report's five paragraphs, one is pertinent to this project: "it was announced by the Egyptian press on the 4th of May that the Soviet Government had invited the Egyptian Government to send a delegation of eight Egyptians concerned with Labor Affairs on a three months' visit to the Soviet Union" (FO 407/235, "Soviet Egyptian," p. 53). Dietmar Rothermund addresses the psychological moment of July 1956, when "Nehru accompanied Nasser on his flight to Cairo; on this flight Nasser told Nehru about the American denial of the aid for the Aswan Dam on which he had counted" (Rothermund, 2014, p. 23.).

ProQuest "Historical Newspapers"

At five points, Pflugfelder cites the New York Times, which happens to be one of the 60 U.S. newspapers indexed "Historical Newspapers" (2022, pp. 187, 208, 225, 226, 230). An independent survey of news from 1955 which referenced "Cairo"—surprisingly—did not pertain to Egypt. "Moscow Reply to Peace Bid 'Limited'" noted the "Cairo and Berlin declarations, signed by the governments of Britain and the United States" which identified Taiwan [Formosa] to be an integral part of the national territory

of China (Chicago Daily Tribune, 1955a), as did reference to "the Cairo agreement and the Potsdam declaration and other international documents including a statement by President Truman in 1950" (Daniel, 1955a, p. 5.).

So, too, did "Shake-Up in Moscow is Portentous" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1955). The announcement of U.S.S.R. Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov to the Supreme Soviet regarding the development of hydrogen bombs, also referred to the Cairo and Potsdam declarations as well as the capitulation of Japan that Formosa and the Pescadores "are undeniably territory of the [communist] Chinese people's republic" (published as "Textural Excerpts from Speech by Molotov Outlining Soviet Union Foreign Policy, The New York Times, 1955a, p. 5.; as well as Chicago Daily Tribune, 1955b).

The specific dates of these references are contentions. W. Mott and J. Kim address what they call "the geopolitics of Cold War," they note the events of three years previous to these developments: "by 1952… Moscow was courting New Delhi" (Mott and Kim 2006). The first reference to Egypt's geopolitical realignment appeared during the summer in a reference to "Prime Minister Nehru, who flew [from Moscow] to Warsaw and will go on to Vienna, Belgrade, Rome, London, Cairo, and New Delhi" (Daniel, 1955b, p. 3.).

According to the periodicals digitized in the "Historical Newspapers" database, the penultimate step of Egypt's geopolitical realignment was "the official invitation to Premier Gamal Abdel Nasser to visit Moscow and Colonel Nasser's acceptance to make the trip next spring are being made full use of by Egyptian propagandists for consumption at home, in the Arab world, and abroad" (Marashian, 1955).

A high point in this narrative arc regarding Egypt's geopolitical realignment occurred during U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles' press conference, at which "choosing his words carefully, the Secretary explained that he had received indications that the Soviet Union had offered to supply military equipment to Egypt; these indications were unofficial, but they bore the mark of reliability, he said" (Schmidt, 1955, p. 1.).

Foreign Broadcast Information Service Daily Reports

In conversation with Pflugfelder's book on geoengineering which references Soviet scientists Mikhail Budyko and Vladimir Vernadsky (2022, pp. 111, 141), references to "Moscow" in Radio Cairo's various domestic and regional services followed narrative arc similar to that noticed in the Proquest Historical Newspapers database. The year 1955 began with a journalist's report on President Eisenhower's "State of the Union" address before the U.S. Congress, which referenced Radio Moscow's analysis of the same speech (FBIS-FRB-55-006, 7 January 1955).

Egypt's geopolitical realignment was marked by India's Prime Minister Nehru's press conference in Cairo, during which he expressed a hope to visit Moscow "in June or July and not before," observing that diplomatic "alliances are meant for peace, but they cause a feeling of anxiety and lack of tranquility" (FBIS-FRB-55-034) 16 February 1955).

Meanwhile, Cairo Radio monitored Radio Moscow, relaying the latter's comment on "Britain joining the Iraqi-Turkish alliance" (FBIS-FRB-55-066, 4 April 1955). A high point in this narrative arc regarding Egypt's geopolitical realignment occurred with the return from the Bandung Conference of Gamal Abdel Nasser "who earned the gratitude of half the nations of the world and who commanded great respect and esteem… all people in New Delhi, London, Washington, Moscow, Paris, and Rio de Janeiro hail and support the victory of Gamal and the cause of peace and U.N. principles" (FBIS-FRB-55-086, 2 May 1955). Of geopolitical pacts, Mohammed Hasanayn Haykal observed: "alliances are alliances, whether concluded by America or Russia; the hydrogen bomb remains the same, whether Moscow or Washington sets it off" (FBIS-FRB-55-098, 18 May 1955). When Nehru returned from Moscow, his joint statement with Nasser placed his diplomatic mission in the arc of Egypt's geopolitical realignment: "the Western allies would have liked him, the messenger of peace, to have visited San Francisco where the United Nations was celebrating its 10th anniversary; it is as if Nehru went to Russia to point out to the Western allies that the road to peace passes through Moscow" (IS-FRB-55-135, 13 July 1955).

In addition to monitoring other nations' broadcasts, as a service to local communities Cairo Radio monitored the local press. According to Radio Cairo's Egyptian Home Service, both the official newspaper *Al-Jumhuriya* and the semi-official Al-Ahram recalled to the four world leaders Bulganin, Eden, Eisenhower, and Faure gathered for disarmament talks in London, memories of World War II: "it is essential that each of the Big Four recall memories of war and its aftermath, as well as the hopes of other people for peace" (FBIS-FRB-55-138, 17 July 1955). This provides context for the editorial in the semi-official daily newspaper *Al-Akhbar*, responding to Nasser's plans to visit Moscow, that "the visit the Egyptian Premier will pay to Soviet Russia is considered a major turning point in Egyptian policy and in the policy of the Middle East in general" (FBIS-FRB-55-156, 10 August 1955).

Radio Cairo's Egyptian Home Service emphasized the significance of Nasser's travel plans: "the importance of this news is attributed to two factors: first, this visit will be the first visit for an Egyptian Premier and leader to the Soviet Union; second, it shows clearly what Premier Gamal Abdul Nasser asserted more than once, that his policy does not follow the East nor the West, but that it reflects Egypt's interest first and foremost" (FBIS-FRB-55-157, 11 August 1955). FBIS also picked up reports from Radio Beirut: first, that Egypt's ambassador presented his credentials (FBIS-FRB-55-166, 25 August 1955); and second, that members of Egypt's press delegation visited Moscow State University, prayed communally at the Moscow mosque, and laid a wreath on [what was then] the Lenin-Stalin mausoleum (FBIS-FRB-55-178, 10 September 1955).

According to Radio Cairo's Egyptian Home Service, the newspaper *Al-Tahrir* published an article under the byline of Col. Anwar Al-Sadat, with his analysis of the visit of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State George Allen to Nile lands: "the capital of Egypt is Cairo and not Washington, or London, or Paris, or Moscow; Cairo and Cairo alone is the capital which plans and implements the policy insuring the reinforcement of its army, the guaranteeing of its security, without requiring consultation or interference, control or guardianship from any foreign state, whether in the East or West" (FBIS-FRB-55-208, 5 October 1955). To the rest of the Arab world, the "*Voice of the Arabs*" shortwave service analyzed three foreign sources of news—the daily *France-Soir*, as well as weeklies Time and Newsweek—as the world puzzles over the arms deal concluded between Egypt and "the Eastern Bloc countries" (FBIS-FRB-55-211, 27 October 1955).

According to Radio Cairo's Egyptian Home Service, the weekly newsmagazine *Al-Musawwar* informed readers: "the best description of the American stand toward our question these days is that America does not understand us, as Premier Abdul Nasser has stated: when Egypt headed toward Moscow and Prague to obtain its requirements of arms, it did not choose this course, but America and its Allies have chosen it for us when they refused to supply us with arms on acceptable terms" (FBIS-FRB-55-215, 3 November 1955). The year of realignment concluded with Radio Cairo's Egyptian Home Service, which reported from the semi-official *Al-Akhbar* "that Pandit Nehru has made another statement against the Baghdad Pact; the pact is thus being attacked from several directions: Russia in the North, India and China in the East, and the Arab states opposed to foreign alliances in the West and center" (FBIS-FRB-55-237, 7 December 1955).

References to "Cairo" in Radio Moscow's various services was more extensive during this specific year. Reporting in Russian to the Far East, Moscow's *TASS* reported from Beirut that the Lebanese press commented widely on the decisions of the Arab League's political committee in Cairo (FBIS-FRB-55-002, 3 January 1955). The following day, via Radio Moscow in Arabic to the Near East, Prof. Lapitsky delivered his second lecture: "Pages from the History of the Worker's Movement in Egypt" (FBIS-FRB-55-003, 4 January 1955). The following week, Ivan Vassilyev recalled the Cairo Declaration of 1943, in his analysis of the U.S. treaty with Chiang Kai-Shek (FBIS-FRB-55-009, 13 January 1955).

In Turkish, Radio Moscow's Soviet Near Eastern Service reported that Cairo radio reported that members of the Syrian parliament protested any defense pact between Iraq and Turkey (FBIS-FRB-55-017, 23 January 1955). With this passing reference to Cairo as a city at the center of Arab politics, Radio Moscow continued to refer to "Cairo" as a metaphor for the legal status of Taiwan/Formosa—similar to the U.S. newspapers in the "Historical Newspapers" database. In English, Radio Moscow's North American service responded to the *New York Herald Tribune*'s statements about Taiwan and the Pescadores, recalling "in the Cairo Declaration of 1 December [1943], the United States not only recognized China's territorial integrity but also confirmed

that the island of Taiwan was an inalienable part of Chinese territory" (FBIS-FRB-55-018, 26 January 1955). In Russian, Radio Moscow's home service returned to the Arab League's head of state conference in Cairo FBIS-FRB-55-019, 26 January 1955).In French, Radio Moscow's European service responded to Le Monde's assertion that Formosa and the Pescadores were not Chinese territory, with a reminder: "in the Cairo Declaration of 1 December 1943, the United States and other powers confirmed that Formosa forms an inalienable part of China" (FBIS-FRB-55-019, 26 January 1955).

Radio Moscow occasional broke the series of references to "Cairo" as a metaphor for the legal status of Taiwan/Formosa, and acknowledged Egypt's capital as a city at the center of Arab politics. In English, via Radio Moscow's North American service, Yakov Viktorov posed a series of questions to listeners regarding military bases, including "should relations between countries be built on a basis of equality or inequality?" (FBIS-FRB-55-023, 2 February 1955). Also in English, via the North American service, with regard to Taiwan/Formosa, referred again to "the Cairo Declaration, the Potsdam Declaration, and the agreement on the capitulation of Japan, all of which the United States signed" (FBIS-FRB-55-024, 2 February 1955). Also in English, via the service to the United Kingdom, another commentator responds to the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Glasgow Herald*, and the *Yorkshire Post* that "Britain has twice confirmed the fact that Taiwan belongs to China—by its signature under the Cairo Declaration and the Declaration adopted in Berlin after the end of the war" (FBIS-FRB-55-026, 4 February 1955).

"Cairo" continued to serve Radio Moscow as a metaphor for the legal status of Taiwan/Formosa. In English, Radio Moscow's North American service responded to "some papers in the United States," which were "trying to mislead the public about Washington's position toward the Chinese People's Republic" (FBIS-FRB-55-026, 5 February 1955). Transmitting in English-language Morse code to North America, Moscow's *TASS* reported from Cairo that the Arab Prime Minister's conference closed without a press communiqué (FBIS-FRB-55-027, 7 February 1955). Transmitting in Russian to the provinces, Moscow's *TASS* reported that "Formosa and the Pescadores… are undoubtedly Chinese territory; this was especially admitted in the Cairo Declaration of 1943 and the Potsdam Declaration in 1945, signed by both the United States and Britain" (FBIS-FRB-55-028, 8 February 1955). In Russian, Radio Moscow's home service hosted Yuri Bochkarov who referred to "the fact that Taiwan and Penghulitao belong to China is recognized in such international documents as the Cairo and the Potsdam declarations" (FBIS-FRB-55-032, 14 February 1955).

Transmitting in English-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* reported that the conference of Prime Ministers of Arab countries held in Cairo.. clearly showed that… Egypt and Syria and Saudi Arabia are against Nuri Al-Said's treacherous machinations" (FBIS-FRB-55-033, 15 February 1955). Yet throughout this year of realignment, for *Radio Moscow* "Cairo" referred to China, as frequently as it referred to Egypt. In English, *Radio Moscow*'s North American service recalled again: "on 1

December 1944, the United States, Britain, and China signed the Cairo Declaration which said that all the territories Japan had seized from the Chinese, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores, should be returned to China" (FBIS-FRB-55-034, 16 February 1955).

Transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* drilled down on differences between the policies of the U.K. and U.S. with regard to the "islands off the coast of Communist China" (FBIS-FRB-55-039, 24 February 1955). In Arabic to the Near East, Ermin Arakilov delivered weekly comments on Arab events, citing Al-Ahram that "Washington sees in this [Arab League] conference a serious danger threatening the policy of the United States in Asia and Africa" (FBIS-FRB-55-041, 25 February 1955). Again transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, press reports indicate a struggle between the U.K. and U.S. for leadership of the Middle East (FBIS-FRB-55-049, 10 March 1955).

Radio Moscow, broadcasting in Arabic to the Near East, sustained a weekly review of Arab events which acknowledged: "it Is known that the United States, supported by Britain, is at present pursuing a policy aimed at the establishment of the so-called 'northern wing of the Middle East bloc' with the participation of the Arab states" (FBIS-FRB-55-050, 11 March 1955). Radio Moscow, broadcasting in English to the United Kingdom, returned to the "Cairo Declaration, which the governments of Great Britain and the United States signed on 1 December 1943, they proclaimed it to be their purpose to restore to China all the territories wrested from the Chinese by Japan, such as Manchuria, Formosa, and the Pescadores" (FBIS-FRB-55-074, 14 April 1955).

Meanwhile, transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* quoted the Egyptian newsmagazine Rose Al-Yussef "that imperialist circles of the United States and Britain are planning to set up a new military pact which would tie the countries of Central Africa to Anglo-American military plans" (FBIS-FRB-55-087, 3 May 1955). Similarly, in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, *TASS* reported a list of goods appended to the 27 March 1954 trade agreement between the U.S.S.R. and Egypt (FBIS-FRB-55-096, 13 May 1955). Finally, *Radio Moscow*, broadcasting in Arabic to the Near East, reported that Shaikh Ahmad Hasan Al-Baquri, as Egyptian minister of Islamic charitable endowments (waqf), visited China with Professor Mustafa Kamil of Cairo University: "they spent three weeks seeing for themselves the activities of the cultural and educational organizations and the state of religions" (FBIS-FRB-55-115, 11 June 1955).

Transmitting in Russian, Moscow's *TASS* reported from Cairo that U.S.S.R. Ambassador Daniel Semyonovich Solod hosted a reception in honor of chief editor of *Pravda* D. T. Shepilov, which Egyptian ministers of trade and health attended, with the Arab League secretary, heads of embassies, representatives of Egyptian business, and Egyptian journalists numbering 200 total (FBIS-FRB-55-147, 28 July 1955). In Arabic,

Radio Moscow's Soviet Near Eastern Service reported the "events of 30 July" as the 25th anniversary of Egypt's "struggle for freedom and independence" as joined with "its struggle against joining military alliances which are being formed in the Middle and Near East" (FBIS-FRB-55-149, 1 August 1955, see Gifford 2019, Gershoni and Jankowski 2002, and Badrawi 1996). Transmitting in English-language Morse code to North America, Egypt's official daily newspaper *Al-Jumhuriya* described Egyptian cotton exported to the People's Republic of China as "an important act [which] means that Egypt has broken the fettering foreign monopoly on the country's basic agricultural product" (FBIS-FRB-55-155, 9 August 1955).

Transmitting in English-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* reported that Egypt's Premier Gamal Abdul Nasser accepted an invitation to visit the U.S.S.R. the following spring (FBIS-FRB-55-157, 11 August 1955). In Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* reported on differences in interpretation of the Anglo-Egyptian agreement (12 February 1953) between Great Britain and Egypt regarding the Sudan (FBIS-FRB-55-159, 14 August 1955). Via *Radio Moscow* in Arabic to the Near East, an unidentified commentator surveyed the Egyptian daily press with regard to Premier Abdul Nasser's plans to visit the Soviet Union (FBIS-FRB-55-163, 19 August 1955), then criticizing John Foster Dulles' proposal for peace with Israel (FBIS-FRB-55-170, 30 August 1955).

Transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* drilled down on the U.S. President's plan for utilization of the Jordan waters (FBIS-FRB-55-174, 5 September 1955). Via Radio Moscow in Arabic to the Near East, Victor Beloslovsky noted the expansion of Egypt's trade relations to Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, and Rumania (FBIS-FRB-55-175, 7 September 1955). Transmitting in Russian to the provinces, Moscow's *TASS* reported the exchange of 60,000 tons of Egyptian rice for 500,000 tons of Soviet petroleum "on the basis of mutual advantages" (FBIS-FRB-55-176, 8 September 1955).

Via *Radio Moscow* in Arabic to the Near East, an unidentified commentator noted Soviet Moslems' meetings with leaders of Al-Azhar university, testifying on the freedom of worship they enjoyed before embarking on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (FBIS-FRB-55-181, 15 September 1955). In Persian, *Radio Moscow's* Soviet Near Eastern Service reported on the rice-for-oil agreement (FBIS-FRB-55-185, 21 September 1955). Via *Radio Moscow* in Arabic to the Near East, an unidentified commentator noted the growth of the Partisans of Peace movement (FBIS-FRB-55-188, 22 September 1955, see also Bishop 2020).

Transmitting in English-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* reported that Premier Abdul Nasser's speech at the opening of an arms exhibition in Cairo was widely-reported in the local press (FBIS-FRB-55-191, 29 September 1955). Via Radio Moscow in Arabic to the Near East, an anonymous commentator recalled the speech at the exhibition: "the decision of the Egyptian government to purchase arms

from Czechoslovakia… was purely a commercial transaction…" (FBIS-FRB-55-192, 1 October 1955). Transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* reiterated that Premier Abdul Nasser's speech at the Military Academy "emphasized the tremendous importance of the agreement with Czechoslovakia to purchase arms concluded on a purely commercial basis" (FBIS-FRB-55-193, 3 October 1955).

Again, transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS*'s anonymous commentator noted a second meeting between Premier Abdul Nasser, U.S. Abassador Byroade, and Undersecretary of State Allen—allegedly, in an attempt to persuade Egypt's head of state to annul the agreement with Czechoslovakia (FBIS-FRB-55-194, 4 October 1955). Again, in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS*'s anonymous commentator repeated the statement of Sheikh Abdurrahman Tag as rector of [Al-Azhar], supporting Premier Nasser's defense of the sovereignty and independence of Egypt (FBIS-FRB-55-195, 5 October 1955).

Again, transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS*'s anonymous correspondent reported the remarks of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's minster of the interior, regarding Egypt's decision to purchase weapons from Czechoslovakia: "Egypt, being an independent state, has to take all the measures to equip her army adequately" (FBIS-FRB-55-196, 6 October 1955). In Russian, Radio Moscow's home service reported the success of the U.S.S.R.'s public diplomacy; "the Egyptian public is greatly interested in the forthcoming concerts… all tickets were sold several days before the arrival of the artists" (FBIS-FRB-55-197, 7 October 1955).

Transmitting in Russian to the provinces, Moscow's *TASS* updated listeners with a "new" variation for division of river waters between Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon, and with Israel: they rejected construction of a dam and hydroelectric station on the Jordan River (FBIS-FRB-55-201, 13 October 1955). In Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS*'s anonymous correspondent reported the Soviet Union had signed a friendship treaty with Yemen (FBIS-FRB-55-213, 31 October 1955). Again, transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS* correspondent V. Medvedyev commented on the friendship treaty with Yemen (FBIS-FRB-55-218, 5 November 1955).

Transmitting in Russian-language *Hellschreiber* to Europe, Moscow's *TASS*'s anonymous correspondent reviewed the Egyptian press on the U.S. State Department's statement about the Baghdad Pact organization (FBIS-FRB-55-227, 21 November 1955). In Turkish, Radio Moscow's Soviet Near Eastern Service reported local resistance to the Baghdad Pact organization (FBIS-FRB-55-241, 12 December 1955). Closing out the year, Radio Moscow's North American service reported in English that [Egyptian] students staged a demonstration before Jordan's embassy in Cairo, appealing "to the people of Jordan to prevent her from joining this military organization" (FBIS-FRB-55-246, 17 December 1955).

Intermediate Results

Having consulted primary sources pertaining to Egypt's realignment which are available via the internet via the U.K. Foreign Office, the "Historical Newspapers" database, and the Foreign Broadcast Information Service database, this analysis offers strategies which extend Ehren Helmut Pflugfelder's arguments about geoengineering, persuasion, and climate change. Next, this analysis turns to secondary sources pertaining to Egypt's geopolitical change which are available via the internet as well. Beyond ever-widening circles of access to other scholars' research results provided by Academia.edu and JSTOR, this intervention consults artificial intelligence tools which are marketed to higher education which allow users to generate what claims to be original text including ChatGPT and scite assistant.

Academia.edu

Neither "Egypt" nor "Nile" fall under Pflugfelder's observations concerning geoengineering. For search terms "Egypt," "U.S.S.R.," and "1955," Academia.edu returned the following, listed here in reverse chronological and alphabetical sequences: Andrei Keller, '"Act Quickly and Correctly, in the Austrian Way": Delivering Compensation from Austria to the USSR, 1955-1963', *Istoriya* 13(2), pp. 1-30. / Келлер, А. (2022) '"Действуйте быстро, корректно, по-австрийски"': компенсационные поставки Австрии в СССР 1955-1963 гг.', Электронный научно-образовательный журнал, *История*, 13(2), страницы 1-30.; Santiago Espinoza Garcia, 'Goals and Expectations of Arms Suppliers and Recipients: The Role of the USSR in Egyptian Arms Deal; 1955-1975,' *Ideaz*, 13, pp. 59-72.; Sven Grampp, 'Picturing the Future in Outer Space at the Dawn of the Space Race. Disney's Tomorrowland (USA 1955–56) and Road to the Stars (USSR 1957),' *Repositorium Medienforschung*, 8, pp. 1-29.; Anastasia Kasiyan, 'Kulturdiplomati under den kalde krigen: norske kvinner på besøk i USSR sommeren 1955,' *Nordisk Østforum*, 27(2), pp 159–175.; Joachim Śliwa, 'The Reverend Joseph-Pierre-Louis David (1882-1955). His Lectures on Ancient Egypt and Courses on Coptic Language at the Cracow University,' *Folia Orientalia*, 49. pp. 485-490.; Eric J Schmaltz, 'Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet "On the Resettlement of Germans Residing in the Volga Region (August 28, 1941)', *Journal of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia*, 39(2) pp. 23-25.; and, finally, Ron Shaham, 'Judicial Divorce at the Wife's Initiative: The Sharī'a Courts of Egypt, 1920-1955,' Islamic Law and Society, 1(2), pp. 217-257.

JSTOR

JSTOR is an online platform which provides access to more than 12 million journal articles and book chapters, as well as primary sources in 75 disciplines; JSTOR is a part of ITHAKA, which is a not-for-profit organization what includes Artstor, Ithaka S+R,

and Portico as well. For search terms "Egypt," "U.S.S.R.," and "1955," sorted by relevance, restricted to the period 2010-2020. Returned results include (in reverse chronological order, and in alphabetical order): Danielle Fosler-Lussier (2020) *Music on the Move.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; Nathan J. Citino, 'U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East,' El Shakry, O. (ed.) *Understanding and Teaching in the Modern Middle East.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.; James Dobbins, Gabrielle Tarini, and Ali Wyne, (2020) *The Lost Generation in American Foreign Policy: How American Influence Has Declined, and What Can Be Done about It.* Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation. pp. 1-39.; Sorena De Vita, (2019) 'The Cold War in the Middle East: Then and Now,' *Atlantisch Perspectief*, 43(6), pp. 34-37.; Sonja Schmidt (2018) 'Of Plans and Plants; How Nuclear Power Gained a Foothold in Soviet Energy Policy,' *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 66(1), pp. 124-141.; Florence Gaub and Nicu Popescu, (2018), 'The Soviet Union in the Middle East: An Overview,' in Popescu, N. and Secrieru (eds.) *Russia's Return to the Middle East: Building Sandcastles?* Paris: European Union Institute for Security Studies. pp. 13-20.; M. Sheharyar Khan (2015) 'The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy Towards the Middle East,' *Policy Perspectives*, 12(1), pp. 31-50.; Christina Van Houten (2015) 'Simone de Beauvoir Abroad: Historicizing Maoism and the Women's Liberation Movement,' *Comparative Literature Studies*, 52(1), pp. 112-129.; Mary Ann Heiss (2015), 'Exposing "Red Colonialism": U.S. Propaganda at the United Nations, 1953-1963,' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 17(3), pp. 82-115.; Christopher Gunn (2015) 'The 1960 Coup in Turkey: A U.S. Intelligence Failure or a Successful Intervention?,' *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 17, 2. pp. 103-139.; Gregory J. Moore (2014) 'The Difference a Day Makes: Understanding the End of the Sino-American 'Tacit Alliance,' *International Studies Review*, 16(4), pp. 540-577.; Paul Michael McGarr (2014) '"Quiet Americans in India;' The CIA and the Politics of Intelligence in Cold War South Asia,' *Diplomatic History*, 38(5), pp. 1046-1082.; Oscar Sanchez-Sibony(2014) 'Capitalism's Fellow Traveler: The Soviet Union, Bretton Woods, and the Cold War, 1944-1955,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 56(2), pp. 290-319. Pflugfelder's work references none of these, suggesting that JSTOR was not source of his generalizations on geoengineering, persuasion, and climate change.

Similarly, JSTOR leads a curious researcher to Stephen Macekura(2013) 'The Point Four Program and U.S. International Development Policy,' *Political Science Quarterly*, 128(1), pp. 127-160.; Cyrus Schayegh (2013) '1958 Reconsidered: State Formation and the Cold War in the Early Postcolonial Arab Middle East,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 45(3), pp. 421-433.; Khalil Arnous Suleiman (2012) *The International Crisis and the International System: A Study on the Interplay Between the Management of International Strategic Crises and the Structure of the International System.* Doha: Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies.; Chen Kertcher (2012) 'From Cold War to a System of Peacekeeping Operations: The Discussions on Peacekeeping Operations in the Un During the 1980s Up to 1992,' *Journal of Contemporary History*,

47(3), pp. 611-637.; Stacie L. Pettyjohn, (2012) *U.S. Global Defense Posture, 1783–2011.* Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation. Rand Corporation monograph series.; Marsha Siefert, (2012) 'Co-Producing Cold War Culture: East-West Film-Making and Cultural Diplomacy,' in Romijn, P., Scott-Smith, G., and Segal, J. (eds.) *Divided Dreamworlds?: The Cultural Cold War in East and West*. Amsterdam: Amsterdan University Press. pp. 73-94.; and, finally, Jeffrey Michaels, (2011) 'Dysfunctional Doctrines? Eisenhower, Carter and U.S. Military Intervention in the Middle East,' *Political Science Quarterly*, 126(3), pp. 465-492. Again, Pflugfelder's work references none, suggesting that references in JSTOR to "Egypt," "U.S.S.R.," and "1955" during the past ten years were not sources for his generalizations on geoengineering, persuasion, and climate change.

ChatGPT

Egypt and the Russian Federation have had a long-standing relationship that dates back to the Cold War era. In recent years, their diplomatic ties have become stronger, with both countries actively seeking to enhance their cooperation in various fields. In particular, Cairo and Moscow have been collaborating on issues related to security and defense (including military training and arms deals) as well as regional challenges such as the Syrian crisis, and the fight against terrorism. Egypt has also been keen on expanding its economic ties with Russia, with trade and investment between the two countries increasing steadily in recent years; overall, Egypt's current diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation are characterized by cooperation and mutual respect. Egypt's diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation and the Soviet Union are significantly different due to various political, economic, and social changes that have occurred in both countries over time.[4]

scite assistant

In 1955, Egypt's diplomatic relations with the USSR were well established; the motives behind Egypt's decision to establish these relations have not been thoroughly probed or systematically studied by either Soviet or Middle Eastern research, and Soviet interests and political activity in the Middle East during the Stalinist period were believed to be marginal, focusing mainly on nurturing local communist parties (Ginat 1999). However, the Soviet Union viewed Egypt as a bridgehead to expand its interests in the Middle East; the Soviet-Egypt special relations were based on three factors: international system, states, and decision-makers, and pursuit of common security instead of economic interests became an important factor in promoting Soviet-Egypt special relations (Degang, 2018). After negotiations, the two sides finally reached a consensus and signed the Soviet-Egypt Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which was valid for 15 years.

[4] ChatGPT does not generate academic citations.

According to this agreement, Egyptian leaders promised to consult with the Soviet Union in advance before taking any significant measures, and the Soviet Union responded by providing advanced weapons to Egypt, including MiG-23 and Scud missiles, which were superior to the Phantom fighters in performance (Degang, 2018).

Discussion

Inspired by current references to antecedents to the Al-Dabaa power plant, this exercise in digital history builds from Yahia's *Egypt and the Soviet Union, as well as Ginat's Soviet Union and Egypt*. Informed by both the Ideological Scramble for Africa and Russia After the War, in order to question Pflugfelder's twinned assertions that "rhetorical strategies coming from geoengineering advocates have been largely deceptive, hegemonic, deterministic, and exploitative" (Pflugfelder 2022, p. 7) and that "we need to understand the structure, content, purpose, and effect of these geo-constructivist discourses and sound an alarm about their deliberative directions" (Pflugfelder 2022, p. 8).

Primary sources consulted identify key moments in the geopolitical realignment of Egypt toward the U.S.S.R. and AI techniques are tested for their ability to generate cohesive prose. Primary sources also draw attention to Radio Moscow's multi-valent broadcasting, including a shift from "Cairo" as a metaphor for China's claim to offshore islands, to Egypt's political capital. Secondary works provide necessary context: cinema and filmmaking, compensation from Austria, emergence of nuclear power, existentialist feminism, Intellectual history, music, the legal freedoms of Germans in the U.S.S.R. and of women in Egypt, and, finally, both Turkey's foreign policy and that of the U.S. toward both China and India.

Declaration of Interest Statement

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Notes on Contributor

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Bridge among Cultures and Worlds – István Zimonyi's Work Related to the Arab World in the Light of Egyptian–Hungarian Cultural Relations[1]

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Abstract:

The history of relations between the Arab world and Hungary dates back a very long time, and the role of influential personalities like István Zimonyi is of paramount importance in it. Speaking of two distant cultures, among which there is no common ground for effective communication, these people can make the missing bridges and construct links. Prof. Dr. István Zimonyi is the head of the Department of Medieval Studies at the University of Szeged, a well-known researcher of Hungarian early history and the medieval Turkic speaking nomads living in Eastern Europe, as well as the former director of the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Cairo between 2007 and 2011. Nevertheless, Zimonyi is also an Orientalist who has a deep knowledge of the Arab world, language, and culture. In his works as a researcher the collection and translation of Arabic sources with commentary has an important role. The aim of this paper is to provide a comprehensive overview of the diplomatic and cultural relations between the Arab world and Hungary with a special focus on Egypt, as well as to demonstrate the role of István Zimonyi's work in it.

Keywords:
Arab world, Cultural relations, Egypt, Hungary, István Zimonyi

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Introduction

When looking at the scepter of Hungary, one of the crown jewels, most of the Hungarians do not even know that it is decorated by a mountain crystal stone that originates from Egypt. It is the same case with the fast and reliable motor coaches running alongside the banks of River Nile, as most of us have never heard that these are still called "Magari" for the reason that their prototypes were produced by the Hungarian Ganz Factory (Magyarország Nagykövetsége Kairó, n. d.). Nor is it a common knowledge of Hungarians, including football fans, that besides Puskás' well-known activities in Egypt Hidegkúti also led the Al-Ahly football team to championship. However, according to Professor István Zimonyi's experience, based on these facts in Egypt "the Hungarian name has a good sense, people associate it with fastness, accuracy and reliance. This is the basic knowledge that an average Egyptian knows about Hungary. (Kovács, 2013, p. 93). Although Hungary's links to the Arab world and Egypt are deep-rooted, looking through history, they show a diverse picture with varied intensity. Influential personalities such as the aforementioned football stars or István Zimonyi, whose work forms the subject of this study, have played and continue to play a very important role in the development of these relations in all fields.

First, in the following thesis I will briefly describe the development of Egyptian–Hungarian diplomatic relations, wherein I will discuss in details the cultural, scientific and educational field, as well. Then, I will introduce the work of István Zimonyi, focusing on his connections with the Arab world and Egypt in particular, as well as highlighting the significance of his activities in the context of the Egyptian–Hungarian bilateral relations. It represents the Professor's activity well how his students, colleagues and friends talk about him in the book published in honour of his 60th birthday: "This perseverance is still enviable and those who are close to him know that he never gave up even in the most difficult moments, what is more, he can gain strength from the difficulties." (Kincses–Nagy, 2017, p. 5).

Overview of Egyptian – Hungarian Diplomatic Relations

Historical relations between Hungary and Egypt date back to the 16th century, when Egypt and the central regions of the Kingdom of Hungary also became part of the Ottoman Empire. However bilateral relations in all fields, including cultural relations, as well, only began to revive significantly at the end of the 19th century. Members of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's colony living in Egypt maintained good relations with the Khedive's (Viceroy) court and thus played an influential role in Egyptian politics. One of the most prominent among them was Marianna May Török Szendrői (1877–1968)[3], who came to Egypt as the wife of Abbas II Helmy (1900-1913) and was

[3]Szendrői Török Marianna May (1877–1968): Hungarian noble lady born in America, daughter of Tivadar Puskás, writer, pianist and painter. Abbas Hilmi II (1874–944), the last Egyptian khedive's Hungarian wife

also a well-known patron of arts. As a result of the Treaty of Trianon and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Hungarian successor state's privileges over the Suez Canal and over importing Egyptian goods were also abolished, creating a new base for the bilateral relations (Al-Naggar et al., 2021, pp. 5– 8). The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was also a milestone in the history of Hungarian–Egyptian diplomatic ties, as these could only develop after the country's independence.

The General Consulate of Hungary opened in Cairo under the leadership of Andor Semsey as the Chargé d'Affaires in 1923, and shortly after it in 1928 the Embassy of Hungary in Cairo also opened its doors to the public. Félix Parcher was appointed as the first Ambassador of Hungary to Cairo, although it should also be noted that Hungarian diplomats did not actually work from Cairo until 1939 (Al-Naggar, 2015, pp. 64–69). Egypt also sent its first ambassador to Budapest during this period. Among the official diplomatic visits, which are always considered to be significant events, the visit of Ismail Sedky Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt, to Hungary in 1932 and the visits of the son of the Hungarian regent, Miklós Horthy Jr., to Egypt (1932, 1934, 1938, 1939) brought the most outstanding results in all areas of bilateral relations. The Hungarian Mission in Cairo operated uninterrupted until 1941 being the only Hungarian embassy in Africa at that time, but in 1942, during the World War II, diplomatic relations became temporarily cut off (Al-Naggar, 2011, pp. 7–14).

The suppression of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 was an important event in the 20th century Egyptian–Hungarian relations, in which the Suez crisis also played a major role. Hungarian diplomacy started to put a focus on the Arab region from the second half of the 1950s, and even though political relations gradually deteriorated after the 1960s, with a shift towards economic and trade, it continued to be important with a significant level of interaction in these areas. There was also an ideological shift within the bloc of socialist countries starting from the 1960s, which led them to open up to conservative states with large financial reserves. Accordingly, the Hungarian state leadership also tried to compensate for the problems caused by the 1973 oil crisis through trading with Arab states. The Hungarian export capacity to Arab countries increased tenfold between 1965 and 1980. However, this intensive growth came to a halt in the late 1980s as a result of the Arab–Israeli wars, and in particular as a consequence of Hungary's opening towards Israel. The first significant step in the improvement of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Israel was the meeting of Péter Várkonyi, Hungarian Foreign Minister of Foreign Affairs, with Jichlak Samir, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, on the margin of the 40th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, which was followed by the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1989. Initially, the main focus was on the establishment of better relations in the fields of culture and tourism, but the scope of these connections gradually expanded, which

who after converting to Muslim religion became known as Djavidan Hanem (Al-Naggar-Prantner, 2022, pp. 659–669).

resulted in an ever worsening relationship with the Arab countries (J. Nagy, 2020, pp. 628–631). Looking at the Hungarian–Egyptian relations, even the regime change did not bring any improvement as Mubarak saw the rapid collapse of European communist regimes as a dangerous example for his country. Moreover, Hungary was also among the countries that supported Soviet Jews emigrating to Israel, which was not considered as a friendly gesture from the perspective of Arab countries. Nevertheless, Egyptian–Hungarian relations gradually began to improve, as Egypt found it important to maintain the good relations and was usually quick to adapt to the changing circumstances. József Antall, the first Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, also visited Egypt between 4–6 November 1991 and had meetings with President Hosni Mubarak. They expressed a mutual desire to expand economic, trade, cultural and educational ties between the two countries and signed an agreement on the abolition of double taxation. This visit had symbolic importance and manifested Hungary's intention to continue to see Egypt as an important partner after the regime change, as well (J. Nagy, 2020, pp. 627-639).

Even though József Antall's visit to Egypt was symbolic, Hungarian–Arab relations were not a real priority after the regime change, and accordingly neither were they intensive, as the transatlantic integration became the main priority for Hungarian diplomacy. The sudden disappearance of large state-owned enterprises also limited temporarily the Hungarian economy's ability to export. Since then, the attitude and interest of the actual governing Hungarian leadership towards Arab countries is also manifold. The most active of these periods was the 'Arab opening' of the second Orbán government, continued by the Hungarian prime minister's visit to Egypt in 2011 (Ladányi, N. Rózsa, 2012, pp. 128-131). Since 2004, the Hungarian–Egyptian relationship should also be considered in the context of the European Union. From this point of view as well, Egypt is a significant partner and an important participant of the various institutional frameworks of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Szalai, 2021, pp. 6-10). In recent years, relations with the Arab world have been steadily developing, especially in terms of economy (by 2015, Egypt had become the most important export market for Hungarian goods in the Arab and African region). State leaders and ministers of the two countries also visit each other frequently, while inter-ministerial and inter-institutional interactions are also intense. This was well-illustrated by the visit of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to Budapest in 2015 and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's visit to Cairo the following year (Magyarország Nagykövetsége Kairó, n. d.).[4] New areas of cooperation such as defence policy are also emerging. For example, in 2016 a general

[4]Egyptian–Hungarian political relations are particularly active in terms of official visits. In addition to those mentioned above, György Szabad, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, visited Egypt in 1993, President Árpád Göncz in March 1996, the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2000, the Minister of Culture in 2001, the Minister without portfolio responsible for Secret Services in 2002, President Katalin Szili and Bálint Magyar, Minister of Education, in 2003, István Hiller, Head of the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, in 2004, and Kálmán Kovács, Minister of Information Technology and Communications, in 2005. In 1992, Fathi Surur, Speaker of the Egyptian Parliament, also visited Hungary (Magyar-Egyiptomi Baráti Társaság, 2009).

framework agreement on military cooperation was signed by the ministers of the two countries (Magyarország Kormánya, 2022).

One of the most significant events of recent years took place in Budapest in July 2017, when after the first summit of the Visegrád Group with Egypt, the leaders of the five countries made a joint declaration regarding possible areas of cooperation, highlighting, among others, the fight against terrorism, the management of the migration crisis, and further development of the economic cooperations (Szalai, 2021, p. 10). According to the official communication of the current Hungarian government in power, Egypt also considered as an important partner with regard to the European energy crisis that has recently unfolded in the wake of the Russian–Ukrainian war (Magyar Hírlap, 16 November 2022). Most recently, László Kövér, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, visited Egypt in November 2022, where he met with Hanafy Ali El-Gebali, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Abdel Wahab Abdel Razeq, President of the Egyptian Senate, the President and members of the Hungarian–Egyptian Friendship Society, moreover, with Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of Egypt (Magyar Hírlap, 16 November 2022).

Cultural Relations between the Two Countries

Egypt, with its millennia-old cultural and historical heritage, also became a major intellectual centre of the Arab region by the first half of the 20th century, and thus remained an important partner for European countries. At the same time, cultural links between the Carpathian Basin and Egypt date back to the time of the ancient Roman Empire. It is proved by the fact, that in the area of Pannonia province, which once stretched across the present-day Transdanubia (Dunántúl) region of the country, an Isis shrine and other archaeological finds of that period were also excavated attesting the existence of a religious cult coming from Egypt. Contemporary Arabic sources also prove that there was interaction between the two areas in the Middle Ages, as well, as a result of Turkish conquests and Christian pilgrimages. Furthermore, those soldiers who believed to be the ancestors of 'magarabs' also arrived to Nubia in the late 16th century, which is subject to István Zimonyi's researches, as well.

Hungarian refugees of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 also created a colony in Cairo. The beginning of Hungarian researches in the field of Egyptology also dates back to the times before the First World War, when Fülöp Back[5] sponsored the first

[5] Fülöp Back (1862–1958): Merchant, businessman, sponsor, 'co-owner of the Paris-based Orosdi-Back World Trading Company, "a multi-billionaire by today's standards." In 1907, he decided to start excavations at his own expense and to donate the findings to his "beloved hometown of Budapest." "The excavations proved to be very successful. Not only did they uncover tombs from the Old Kingdom, but they also discovered a temple, the temple of Pharaoh Ptolemy I Soter, with beautiful hieroglyphic inscriptions and reliefs," said Győző Vörös, also adding that the stones of the white limestone temple wall are now the part of the Museum of Fine Arts's collection. Thanks to this success, Fülöp Back was awarded

Hungarian excavations (Gamhud excavations) in 1907. Hungarians also played an important role in the foundation of scientific research of the Islamic world, for instance the researcher Ignác Goldziher[6] or Miksa Herz[7], who became internationally renowned for his reconstructions of monuments in Cairo. However, the First World War caused disruption in this field and consequently cultural and academic relations with Egypt were not considered intensive between the two world wars, partly as a result of British influence over the Arab state (Al-Naggar, 2015, pp. 87–90).

However, the establishment of the Egyptian agricultural museum founded by King Fuad in 1938 with a significant Hungarian involvement, represents an interesting yet less-known example of cultural relations of the period. In 1930, Galal Bey Fahim, Secretary General of the Ministry of Agriculture of Egypt, visited several museums across Europe with the mission to find the best expert who could help Egypt establishing an agricultural museum. The Secretary General chose the Hungarian Agricultural Museum in Budapest as well as asked Alajos Paikert, the director of it, to carry out the necessary tasks to organise it. With the establishment of the museum, he contributed to the strengthening of the Ministry's position in Egypt and to raise public awareness of its activities (Al-Naggar, 2015, pp. 94–100).

Active cultural relations between Hungary and Egypt, similar to other fields, started to develope from the 1950s. The reports of the Hungarian ambassador in Cairo reveal a rich cultural life in Egypt at that time with regard to cinema, music, literature, fine arts and science, which was further enriched by the presence of foreigners in the country. However, it can also be noted that cinema stood out as it had the potential to attract a much wider range of Egyptian society than theatre, for instance. For this reason, Hungarian diplomats also made efforts to ensure that despite of the dominance of American films, Hungarian films also gain the opportunity to be presented in the country. The Hungarian embassy often organized film screening events for a variety of

a new concession area, where an intact Ptolemaic cemetery from the 3rd to 2nd centuries BC, 72 painted wooden coffins, including a gilded anthropoid sarcophagus, and a huge quantity of artefacts were discovered. As it was an established practice of those years, archaeologists were allowed to claim half of the finds – Fülöp Back's part filled 70 crates, which he donated to museums in Budapest, Vienna and Krakow. In 1909, Emperor Franz Joseph granted Fülöp Back Hungarian nobility title and the name of "Surányi, with the Egyptian temple hieroglyph on his coat of arms, symbolizing the discovery of a new temple." (*Múlt-kor*, 2007).

[6] Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921): World-renowned orientalist and the founder of modern European Islamic studies. The Ignác Goldziher Institute for Jewish Historical and Cultural Research, among others, bears his name. "His main fields of research were the history of Semitic philology and literature, as well as the history of the Muslim religion. His work has covered almost all areas of Islamic cultural history. He was the first to examine the historical development of this world religion and can be considered as one of the founders of modern critical Islamic studies. He was responsible for the identification and classification of the manuscripts written in Oriental languages - Hebrew, Turkish, Arabic, Persian - in the Hungarian National Museum's collection." (*kultúra.hu*, 2020).

[7] Miksa "Pasha" Herz (1856–1919): Hungarian enthusiast of monument preservation, museum director and architect. "He worked in Egypt for 35 years, 25 of which he directed the preservation and restoration proccess of Arab–Islamic and Copt art monuments. He was the director of the Arab Museum in Cairo (now the Museum of Islamic Art), but also designed many modern buildings." (*Terebess Online, n. d.*).

audiences, and usually with great success. Film previews and simultaneous interpretation were used to make the films more interesting and easily understandable, and it was also considered during the film selection processes that Egyptian people are used to Western-type of films. Culture also served as a mediating tool to relieve stress caused by political differences, and it made possible for Hungary to successfully promote itself in Egypt. With the advent of rental services, embassies also took advantage of this emerging opportunity. Accordingly, renting films became possible at the Hungarian mission as well, which brought closer the Hungarian culture to an even wider section of society. In 1962, the Hungarian Radio and Television signed an agreement with the United Arab Television on the exchange of television programmes, experiences and materials. In 1963, Egyptian film days were also organised in Budapest, but these only reached a limited success among the Hungarian audience (Fügedi, 2012, pp. 143–147).

Besides the success of Hungarian films, Hungarian achievements in the field of music should also be highlighted. Pieces of music by Liszt, Kodály and Bartók have also attracted great interest in Egypt, and musical events organised by the Hungarian Embassy have also become regular, as well as Hungarian music started to be broadcasted on Egyptian Radio programmes. In 1955, a cooperation agreement was also signed by the Hungarian and Egyptian Radio, which was similar to the agreement between the two television stations. As a consequence, the Hungarian Radio also started to play Egyptian music on a weekly basis. However, due to cultural misunderstandings, Egyptian Radio often referred to all kinds of Hungarian music as "Gypsy music" which the Hungarian side usually complained about. The Bartók Memorial Committee also achieved significant results in Egypt those years. Among others, a special concert commemorating Bartók was held at the Cairo Opera in 1956 thanks to the Committee's initiative.

Other commemorations were also aired on the radio and were held in several schools and art-related associations. Pianist Lajos Hernádi gave successful concerts during a month-long tour across Egypt, again with the support of the Bartók Memorial Committee. As a result of these events, a special agreement on music eduction soon enabled students to earn scholarships and get the chance to study in Egypt or in Hungary. Hungarian dance groups visited Egypt on several occasions, as well. For example, in 1963 the Hungarian Wild Roses group took part in the 1st International Folk Arts Festival with several highly successful performances, one of which was personally attended by President Nasser's wife as well, and which also attracted the attention of media. In addition to the above mentioned, the Hungarian National Ballet's successful performance also has to be mentioned, just like Hungarian iceskater artists who were involved in the establishment of the Cairo Ice Revue and Ice Theatre (Fügedi, 2012, pp. 147–151). In terms of educational and scientific relations, 700–800 Egyptians obtained degrees or doctorate title in Hungary in the 1970s and 1980s, which was the result of the fact that in the 1970s among Warsaw Pact countries mainly Hungary could host Arab students wishing to pursue their university studies in the region (Kovács, 2013, p. 91).

Gyula Germanus (1884–1979), the famous Hungarian orientalist, also visited Egypt several times, although his recognition and knowledge were not always used in the most optimal way for the advantage of Hungary by Hungarian diplomats. Germanus was a respected person in the Arab region, many of his works were translated into Arabic and he even participated in the work of the Egyptian Arabic Academic Dictionary Committee. His first trip to Egypt was back in the 1930s, when he became a student at Al-Azhar University where he obtained a wide range of academic contacts and, as a practising Muslim, also prepared for his pilgrimage to Mecca. During later visits, he also had the opportunity to meet with President Nasser on several occasions (in 1955 and again in 1964) (Udvarvölgyi, 2021, pp. 249–281).

The 1950s marks the beginning of the active presence of Hungarian Egyptologists and archaeologists in Egypt. The first to visit the country was the art historian and Egyptologist Aladár Dobrovits, and later in 1964, Hungary also participated with an expedition and several Hungarian researchers in the international project called "The Great Nubian Rescue Mission" organised by UNESCO, which allowed some of the finds to be transferred to the Hungarian Museum of Fine Arts. This project has also significantly raised the reputation of Hungarian science internationally, as well as paved the way for further excavations by Hungarian researchers in Egypt. The most notable of these further projects are linked to Egyptologist László Kákosy, as well as to Egyptologist and historian Vilmos Wessetzky, but also to ancient historian and Nubiologist László Török (Udvarvölgyi, 2021, pp. 271–272). In particular, Professor Kákosy continued his on-site research in Thebes in the 1980s, which laid down the foundation of Hungarian archaeological group excavations still active today (Kovács, 2013, p. 91).

One of the most recent major achievements of this process was the opening of an exhibition at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo entitled 'Hungarian excavations in the metropolis of Thebes – Celebration for the 102 years of fieldwork in Egypt' in 2009, which showcased a summary of the work of Hungarian archaeologists in Egypt from the very beginning. With two exceptions, the exhibition of 82 artefacts was built around the theme of ancient Egyptian cult of the dead, with a sculptural block depicting Djehutimes, the official of Ramses II, placed in a centre position. The idea of the exhibition came up in 2000, when the Egyptian Museum in Cairo celebrated its centenary. In this framework, it was also initiated to present the artefacts of foreign missions working in Egypt, including those of the Hungarians, by organising temporary exhibitions (*Múlt-kor*, 2009d). Finally, the exhibition was opened personally by István Hiller, Minister of Education and Culture, in Cairo. During his official visit to Egypt in 2008, the Minister also signed the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Work Plan between Hungary and Egypt for the period of 2008–2010 with Hany Helal[8], Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, in Cairo (*Pécsi Újság*, 2009).

[8] Hany Helal: Former Egyptian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, member of the Scientific Committee of the Egyptian Foundation for Research and Community Development. He

Hungary's first cultural institute outside of Europe opened in Cairo on 26 October 1974. Since 1977, the institute is known as the Office of the Hungarian Cultural Counsellor in Cairo (KTH), and its primary mission is to promote Hungarian culture, to support educational and scientific cooperation, and to foster the development of friendly relations between the two countries. The Institute also supports the archaeological mission in Egypt, which has a group of six to eight people and conduct field researches for three months every year. The KTH also operates in rural towns mainly as an office spreading informations, and also as an institution for the implementation of the bilateral work plans in the fields of culture, education and science. The director of the institute is the Cultural Counsellor of the Embassy of Hungary in Cairo (Ladányi, N. Rózsa, 2012, pp. 131–133).

Notable cultural events in Egypt attended regularly by Hungarian artists with the support of KTH, are the Cairo International Film Festival, the Alexandria International Dance Festival, the Cairo Jazz Festival, the Cairo Downtown Contemporary Arts Festival and the Cairo International Experimental Theatre Festival. In addition, the Institute also hold a number of literature nights, seminars and other self-organized programmes besides collaborating with the Hungarian guest lecturer at the Faculty of Languages of the Ain Shams University in Cairo, as well as providing place for Hungarian courses in its building. In the library of KTH, visitors can also find thousands of books in Hungarian (official website of the Liszt Institute - Hungarian Cultural Centre Cairo website). In Hungary, it is possible to learn Arabic language at the Department of Semitic and Arabic Studies of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and at the Department of Arabic Studies of Pázmány Péter University. It can also be noted, that educational links between the two countries are developing dynamically. Hungary provides 115 scholarships per year for Egyptian students to study at Hungarian universities within the framework of the Stipendium Hungaricum programme (Magyarország Nagykövetsége Kairó (n. d.).

Altogether, the cultural, scientific and educational relations between Hungary and Egypt are not the most important aspects of the bilateral ties, but in general the cooperation in these areas is very fruitful and productive nowadays, as well. Several civil and non-governmental organisations are also actively involved in the course of strengthening the friendly relationship between the two countries, most notably the Hungarian–Egyptian Friendship Society (Magyar-Egyiptomi Baráti Társaság, 2009). The development of the bilateral cultural and diplomatic relations is also supported by the

graduated in Mining Engineering from the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University in 1974, and obtained a PhD in Earth Sciences in France in 1984. He has been Professor at the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University (1993) and also a President of Senghor University in Alexandria since 2016. He has also been cultural and scientific advisor to the Egyptian Embassy in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. He has served as an expert on earth science programmes at the UNESCO regional office in Cairo (1993) and as a UNESCO advisor and administrative director of the International Centre for Experimental Science and Applications of Synchrotron Light in the Middle East (SESAME) in Jordan (2002). In addition to his political activities, his scientific research has also contributed to the development of education policy in Egypt, for which he has received several awards and distinctions (*YBSSD*, 2022).

activities of several prominent scholars, such as the aforementioned Gyula Germanus. In the rest of this paper, I would like to present the diverse work of one of these well-known scholars, namely István Zimonyi's.

István Zimonyi, the Versatile Researcher and Professor

István Zimonyi was born on 28 June 1956 in Eger, where he studied until the end of his secondary school years. His studies thereafter led him to Szeged, where he began his academic career as a student of English History at the University of Szeged, that time known as József Attila University of Szeged (JATE), between 1976 and 1981. András Róna-Tas's Hungarian prehistory course had a great impact on him with its unique methodology already in his first semester. It made him attending further upper year courses, and as a second year student he officially took up the Altaistics major. The quality of education at the department was high thanks to the teaching staff, but mainly as a result of the work of Professor Róna-Tas, who managed to invite many of the best professors to Szeged. Accordingly, István Zimonyi had the opportunity to learn from reknowned experts like Katalin U. Kőhalmi, István Vásáry, Géza Bethlenfalvy, István Mándoky Kongur and Lajos Tardy, as well as guest lecturers from foreign universities such as Dénes Sinor, Tibor Halasi Kun, or Kljastornij Sz. István Zimonyi's career was significantly influenced by these scholars and by what he learned from them during his university studies, which all contributed to his intention to stay in the academic field and become a researcher (Kincses–Nagy, 2017. p. 5).

In 1981, he graduated in Turkology and English language and literature, moreover, starting from the same year onwards he attended language classes at the Department of Semitic and Arabic Studies of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) for two years. Right after returning home from Cairo where he studied Arabic for a year with scholarship, he passed the intermediate Arabic language exam. His field of research is very diverse, and as his academic career has developed, it broadened even further. He defended his doctoral dissertation (*Volga Bulgars in the early 13th Century*) with summa cum laude in 1983 and obtained his Candidate of Science in Linguistics title (*The Origins of the Volga Bulghars*) in 1990 by defending his dissertation at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, as well. The book version of this dissertation (*Studia Uralo-Altaica* 32, 1990. Szeged.) is still considered as a basic work in Turkology and historiography, but it is also his best known and most cited paper. His scientific interest gradually turned to the medieval history of the Turkic speaking nomads living in Eastern Europe and the early history of Hungarians. The collection and translation with commentary of the available contemporary sources was also essential for these researches (Kincses–Nagy, 2017. p. 5). As part of the results of this work, he published three volumes from the legacy of Mihály Kmoskó (*Kmoskó Mihály, Mohammedan writers on the steppe peoples*), and between 1994 and 1996 he was involved in an international collaboration with Humboldt scholarship. In the framework of this collaboration he also published a joint study with

Professor Hansgerd Göckenjan in Göttingen in 2001 (Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter: die Ǧayhānī-Tradition (Ibn Rusta, Gardīzī, Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam, al-Bakrī und al-Marwazī) – *Veröffentlichung der Societas Uralo-Altaica*, Band 54., 2001, Wiesbaden). He carried out his habilitation in the field of history in 2003, his academic lecture was entitled *Kazar–Hungarian relations* and his seminar lecture was entitled *Islam and the medieval Eastern Europe*. His habilitation thesis was published in 2005 as volume 22 of the Library of Ancient History (*Muslim Sources on the Magyars in the second half of the 9th century The Magyar chapter of the Ǧayhānī Tradition*[9]), which was later published in English and German, as well (*Vámbéry Polgári Társulás*, 2009).

Starting from the beginning of his academic career, he carried out research and hold lectures at several universities. Between 1981 and 1993 he worked at the Department of Altaistics of the University of Szeged (called Attila József University at that time), and starting from 1993 he became an associate professor and the head of the Department of Medieval History. From 1994 he worked for 18 months as a Humboldt-fellow in Giessen, and from 2007 until 2011 he served as the Director of the Cultural Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of Hungary in Cairo, which will later be discussed in details. In 2011 he returned to Hungary, and continued working as an associate professor and head of the Department of Medieval History at the University of Szeged (SZTE). In 2014 he was awarded the title of Doctor of Sciences by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His successfully defended monography titled as the *Key issues of the early Hungarian history. Theories in the light of recent literature* was published by Balassi Publishing House in the same year. In addition to the Department of Medieval History, he has also been appointed as the head of the Department of Altaistics in 2015. As a university professor he has courses related to his main fields of research, namely to the history of medieval Turkic speaking nomads, to the early Hungarian–Turkish relations, to Eastern Europe and also to the medieval history of the Turkic speaking peoples of the Muslim world. His students regularly participate in academic student conferences succesfully (Kincses–Nagy, 2017. p. 6).

He is also very active in terms of research organisation. In 1991, he launched the book series entitled Library of Hungarian Prehistory, 34 volumes of which have already been published by Balassi Publishing House. He also initiated a two-yearly conference series on the history of medival nomads living in the Eurasian steppe, and also serves the role of the main organizer of it since the first event. Besides reknowned researchers, the conferences also provide opportunity for young professionals and students to present their researches, gain experience and at the same time to try their skills in an international environment (Kincses–Nagy, 2017. p. 6). The first three conferences (1997,

[9] "The name al- Ǧayhānī in the literature is mainly used to refer to a geographer who lived in the court of the 10th century Samanids. However, several members of the al- Ǧayhānī family, attained high positions and had the educational background that enabled them to engage in serious literary activity." (Zimonyi, 2015, p. 13.).

2000, 2002) were held in Szeged, and the lectures of them were published in the Library of Hungarian Prehistory book series. Slowly the conference has outgrown the framework of the Hungarian academic life and consequently since 2004, it is organised with an international scope and under a new title called "Medival Nomads". Accordingly, in 2004 it was held in Szeged, in 2007 in Jászberény, in 2009 in Miskolc, in 2011 in Cairo, in 2013 in Moscow, in 2016 in Szeged, in 2018 in Shanghai and in 2019 in Sofia (official website of the *8th International Conference on Medieval History of the Eurasian Steppe*). The written versions of the lectures have been published in the 2005 issue of *Acta Orientalia*, in the 2007-2008 and 2011 volumes of *Chronica*, and in the 53 volumes of *Studia Uralo-Altaica*. István Zimonyi also takes an active role in the scientific community life.

From 1993 to 2005 he was the member of the Committee on Oriental Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, from 2001 to 2004 of the Social Sciences College of the OTKA, and from 2001 to 2006 he was a member of the Committee on History, Ethnography and Cultural Anthropology, Art and Cultural History of the MAB. He is currently a member of the Silk Road Research Group of the MTA-ELTE-SZTE. He is also active as an education professional, for example he also served as a coordinator of the history courses branch of the Humanities Consortium established for the introduction of the Bologna system in Hungary. More precisely, he was responsible for organising the meeting sessions regarding BA and MA course requirements (2004–2007) and was also involved in the implementation of the Curriculum Development tender of the Humanities Consortium. His network of international academic connections is also noteworthy. He is the Vice President of the Göttingen-based Societa Uralo-Altaica, and since the end of 2013 he is also a member of the editorial board of the Amyerican Archivum Eurasia Medii Aevi. He also maintains good relationship with a significant number of Turkish, German, Egyptian, Kazakh and Russian institutions (*Vámbéry Polgári Társulás,* 2009).

Since defending his doctoral dissertation, he has published ten books and edited six other volumes. Furthermore, he has published more than 120 papers and lexicon articles, as well as attended 50 national and international conferences (*Vámbéry Polgári Társulás,* 2009). In 2016, the professor celebrated his 60th birthday and for this occasion his students, colleagues and friends greeted him with a conference and with a published book of the conference lectures (Vér, 2017).

István Zimonyi and the Arab World

István Zimonyi's career is in many ways connected to the Arab world, and especially to Egypt. The interest in Hungarian prehistory and in the Muslim contemporary sources

from the period of the 'conquest of the homeland' (Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin) increased domestically at the turn of the century. At that time, a collection of largely bilingual texts was published (*'The sources of the conquest of the homeland*), in which the works of Muslim authors were published with translations and notes by Géza Kuun, but which was also severely criticised. After the appearance of this book, several other researchers of Hungarian prehistory, including György Györffy, Károly Czeglédy and Gyula Kristó, have also included Muslim sources in their works. Mihály Kmoskó (1876–1931) was an important Hungarian orientalist of the period of dualism and post-World War I era, who was also invited by Bálint Hóman[10] to prepare a modern translation of Muslim sources on pre-conquest of the homeland' Hungarian history. Although Kmoskó completed the work, it was never published partly because of his death, and partly due to his anti-Semitic articles as in the post-World War II Hungarian political situation it was impossible to find a publisher for his works as a consequence of these articles.

However thanks to István Zimonyi's work, Kmoskó's manuscript, which is an essential paper from a scientific point of view, was finally published, setting aside the author's political views. The new scientific results of the more than half a century that has passed since Mihály Kmoskó's death, made it necessary for Zimonyi as an editor to indicate these new findings in notes. Moreover, the manuscript was not yet ready for printing at the time of Kmoskó's death, thus Zimonyi was also responsible for the renumbering of the chapters, the correction of the old language forms in the text and also for the transcription of the informations based on current international standards in use (Balogh, 2000, pp. 324–327).

Zimonyi also has an in-depth knowledge of the Ğayhānī tradition and especially about its Hungarian chapter. Thanks to the international cooperation that was carried

[10] Bálint Hóman (1885–1951): Historian, university professor, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and a leading cultural politician. He was a prominent researcher of Hungarian prehistory and medieval history, his best-known works include the *Hungarian History*, commonly known as "Hóman–Szekfű", and the *Hungarian Money History 1000–1325*. He also held high ranking positions in the cultural administration of the state, being the head of the Library of the Hungarian National Museum from 1922 to 1923 and the director general of the museum from 1923 to 1932. His academic career ended in 1932 when he entered politics: from 1932 to 1938 he was the Minister of Religion and Public Education in the Gömbös- and Darányi- governments, between 1939 and 1942 he was the Minister of Education in the Teleki-, Bárdossy- and Kállay-governments, and for a short period of time he was the Minister without portfolio for National Education in the Imrédy-government. He was also one of the main advisers to Kuno Klebelsberg, Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, regarding cultural policy issues. He rationalised the ministerial administration, public education and higher education, he was open to modern trends in his art policy and achieved significant results in the field of cultural diplomacy, as well. After his resignation in 1942, he was no longer involved in politics, rather focused primarily on scientific organisation works and served as a member of parliament for his constituency, Székesfehérvár, from 1932 to 1945. Due to his political activities, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences expelled him from its members in July 1945, and in 1946 the People's Tribunal sentenced him to life imprisonment as a war criminal, from which he was only released by the Metropolitan Court of Budapest on 6 March 2015 for lack of criminal offence. He was accused of taking part in the government meeting of 26 July 1941, which approved the state of war between Hungary and the Soviet Union. He died in Vác in 1951, but his remains were not identified until 2000 (Ujváry, 2020).

out in the framework of Humboldt scholarship, in Göttingen he has also published a work on the Ǧayhānī tradition[11], but his habilitation thesis published in 2005 has also discussed the Hungarian chapter of the Ǧayhānī tradition, which is the most important Muslim source of early Hungarian history. The German version of this work was published in 2006 and the English version in 2015 by Brill Publishers.

Another aspect of Zimonyis work directly related to the Arab world and Egypt in particular, is his researches regarding the Magarab tribe. The actual discovery of the Magarab tribe is associated with László Almásy, who in 1935, while buying petrol in Wadi Halfa, unexpectedly encountered a man called 'Ibrahim al-Majar'. It was soon cleared, that he was named after a tribe, living on a nearby island, who believed themselves to have been brought there from Europe 400 years ago by Sultan Suleiman I (1520–1566). Subsequently, Almásy visited the tribe, where he found nearly 400 Magarabs. He was also informed about the existence of a similar-sized group of people living near Aswan. According to the tribe's knowledge, their first sheikh was Senjer. Their ancestors married Berber women, from whom they learned the Berber language, but they were aware of the fact that there are Hungarians living in Europe whom they considered their brothers and sisters. Two months later, Salih Osman Basir al-Majar, the sheikh of the Magar village, wrote a letter to Almásy in order to let him know that they had been living in their village, Tarím, for 400 years and that they had always wanted to hear news from Hungary.

The origins of the Magarabs are still disputed, but several studies support Almásy's information (Al-Naggar, 2015, p. 90–91). The name is a compound of the ethnonym 'magar' and the Nubian word 'ab', meaning 'tribe', rather than a merge of Hungarian and Arabic words. During a two month long trip in 1965, István Fodor also visited the Magarabs, who were then being forced to abandon their homes because of the construction of large dams. According to his report, the community consisted of about 7,000 people and their two larger groups were the Nubian-speaking ones in Kom Ombo and Wadi Halfa, most of whom were farmers, and the other Arabic-speaking group lived in the Aswan area, who were mostly merchants (Zimonyi, 2013a, p. 86).

In early 2011, Zimonyi found new data regarding the origin of Magarabs in the sources of Nubian history from the Ottoman period. The discovery led him to visit Ineiba and Qatta with photographer Ágnes Balázs, where he had the opportunity to meet the Magarabs. Most of the their families had moved to Cairo and Alexandria by then, and only 300-400 were found in Ineiba. Based on the Magarabs' opinion and those of Almásy and István Fodor, their ancestor was Ibrahim Magar, who arrived to Nubia under the reign of the Ottoman Selim and Suleiman, where he established a family and from whom the rest of the tribe descended. Based on historical data, Zimonyi

[11] Orientalische Berichte über die Völker Osteuropas und Zentralasiens im Mittelalter: die Ǧayhānī-Tradition (Ibn Rusta, Gardīzī, Ḥudūd al-ʿĀlam, al-Bakrī und al-Marwazī) – *Veröffentlichung der Societas Uralo-Altaica*, Band 54., 2001, Wiesbaden.

found that Hungarians appeared in Egypt as early as the 15th century and during the reign of Mátyás Hunyadi there were diplomatic relations with the Mameluk ruler. [12]

Although in the 16th century Franciscan priest Gábor Pécsváradi and György Huszti Raszinyai stayed in Egypt as prisoners and not by their own will, they wrote the first detailed Hungarian description of the Giza pyramids. Zimonyi did detailed research on the history of the island of Qasr Ibrim and its fortress, and also examined Arabic and Turkish documents (dated between 1620 and 1759) found in a buried clay pot, of which 8 Turkish and 8 Arabic sources mention a total of 31 men named as Magar. According to Zimonyi, it actually means 22 people, due to the repetitions, and he was even able to sort them into a genealogical order. On the basis of these findings, he concluded that Magar Ibrahim, the forefather of the Magarab legends, is a historical person who may have come to Nubia in the late 16th century. "Four generations of his descendants have been revealed from the material published up to 1759. All these have provided historical evidence for the Hungarian origin of the Magarab community, the Magar tribe. The Magarab community may have lost the knowledge of Hungarian language and may have took up local customs in its culture within one or two generations, but at the same time it preserved its ethnic consciousness, the main element of which is their Hungarian origin." (Zimonyi, 2013a, pp. 86–89).

In 2015, Zimonyi also presented his research and findings on the Magarabs in Egypt at a symposium organised by the Office of the Hungarian Cultural Counsellor in Cairo (KTH), which was covered by the Egyptian press, as well. The title of his presentation was *The Magarabs and Qasr Ibrim - Hungarian tribe in Nubia* (*Watani Copt Newspaper*, 18 March 2015). In general, István Zimonyi is a frequent speaker of academic conferences in Egypt. On 10 March 2015, he presented a lecture on his research about Eastern European nomads at the seminar titled as *Hungarian–Egyptian relations* and *Eastern European nomads in the Middle Ages* at Mansoura University. The conference was attended by renowned Egyptian scholars, as well as history students from Mansoura University (*Official website of the University of Mansoura*, 10 March 2015). According to another Egyptian press report, Professor Zimonyi also visited the Library of Alexandria in 2015, where he gave a lecture with the title of *Islam and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages* (*Al-Masry Al-Youm Egyptian Independent daily*, 2015).

István Zimonyi as the Director of the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Cairo (2007–2011)

István Zimonyi is also associated with Egypt and the Arab world by his former position as the Director of the Cultural Counsellor's Office of the Embassy of the Republic of

[12] 'In 1483, after his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, János Lázói visited the Sinai Peninsula and Cairo. During his journey he met many Hungarians who were in the service of the Egyptian Mameluk Sultan. In 1488, two of King Matthias's envoys visited Sultan Kaitbai in Cairo, the second of whom was even mentioned by the famous Egyptian historian Ibn Iyas. King Matthias saw in the Egyptian Mameluk court an ally against the Ottoman Turkish Empire.' (Zimonyi, 2013a, p. 87).

Hungary in Cairo (commonly known as the Hungarian Cultural Institute or as KTH) from October 2007 to the summer of 2011. The duties of the Director of the Cultural Institute include the preparation of programmes for university, academic and government delegations visiting the region, the organisation and implementation of cultural plans, liaising with the relevant cultural and educational offices, supporting the Hungarian archaeological mission, and also other activities that can be freely determined by the Ambassador of Hungary (Ladányi, N. Rózsa, 2012, pp. 131–133). In Zimonyi's own words, his work as a cultural counsellor means "from the diplomatic point of view, the management of the Hungarian–Egyptian cultural agreements. Besides, his cultural mission is to introduce Hungarian culture to Egypt, which on the other side, also means the promotion of Egyptian culture in Hungary. There is an academic side of the work. Developing Hungarian–Egyptian educational and scientific relations is a top priority." (Kovács, 2013, p. 91). Among these diverse tasks, he highlighted the assistance of Arab students wishing to study in Hungary, the promotion of research in Arab studies and Egyptology, and the support of the Hungarian archaeological mission in Egypt as core tasks of the institute.

Zimonyi served as a diplomat in Egypt during the last three and a half years of the Mubarak era, which coincided with the Egyptian revolution. At that time, Egypt was a military dictatorship in practice, alongside formal democratic institutions. It was beneficial from the point of stability and security that are important for such areas of Hungarian interest as tourism, but the revolution caused a very significant downturn affecting the whole Egyptian economy, including this sector, as well. Before Zimonyi actually took his office, the programme of the Hungarian–Egyptian Cultural Exchange Agreement, usually renewed every 3 to 4 years, had alreay been prepared by him in advance, but due to changes in the Hungarian Ministry's practice of administration at the end of his mission, finally it could not be renewed due to administrative difficulties. In his assessment Zimonyi refers to the successful Hungarian–Egyptian Cultural Week as one of the greatest achievements of his term. The most important programme of this event was the more than 2 months long exhibition at the Egyptian Museum presenting the results of the already hundred years old Hungarian scientific field of Egyptology (*Múlt-kor*, 2009b). The Institute also achieved good results in the areas of music and film, which have traditionally been strong in Egyptian–Hungarian cultural relations. There were Hungarian participants at the Cairo Film Festival and at the Documentary Film Festival, but in the field of music, the good relations of the Hungarian State Opera House with Egypt can also be highlighted. There have also been joint events organised with other EU countries, for example the Euro–Arab jazz festival, a circus festival and a film festival. The Szeged Contemporary Dance Company, the Sebő Ensemble and the Nádor Quartet also performed successfully in Egypt as part of the cultural programme of the 2011 Hungarian EU Presidency. The overall success of the programme was not even affected by the outbreak of the revolution, which resulted in a gap of only one and a half to two months (Kovács, 2013, p. 92). In 2011, during the EU Presidency of

Hungary, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán also had an official visit to Egypt, talked with the Secretary General of the Arab League and participated in the Hungarian–Egyptian Business Forum (*MTI*, 2011).

One of the most exciting events of Zimonyi's diplomatic mission was the "Medieval Nomads" international conference on steppe history and Hungarian prehistory, which was first organised in Szeged and has already been discussed in previous chapters. Besides the interesting lectures, the excitement was also caused by the fact that the starting date of the conference, 25 January 2011, coincided with the outbreak of the Egyptian revolution. Despite of it, the event, which attracted a large number of international researchers, went on smoothly for two days, but after the end of the conference programme, things outside on the streets became serious during the attendants' visit to the pyramids (Zimonyi, 2012). The professor recalls the events as follows: "Reaching to the city centre was no longer completely safe, and one of us from the group was unable to get into his hotel. Travelling back to Hungary was not easy either, but after all, a history conference is exciting when you feel the breath of history on the back of your neck." Overall, the conference was a success and the lectures of it have already been published in Issue 9 of *Chronica*. The professor also recalls the research he carried out in Egypt on the Magarab tribe as a very exciting experience, that also happened during his time as a cultural counsellor, and was discussed in details in the previous chapter (Kovács, 2013, p. 94).

Besides the above mentioned, in order to achieve the important goal of establishing a Hungarian Department at the Ain Shams University in Cairo, the professor managed to invite several PhD students, graduated with Hungarian as a major, from Egypt to Szeged. In his view, in order to achieve a widerange presence for Hungarian culture in the Arab region, the best pieces of Hungarian literature should be translated into Arabic, and Egypt is the most suitable country in the region to start the wideranging promotion of Hungarian literature (Őszi, 2014, pp. 11–12). To achieve this goal, the development of international academic relations among universities is a strategic priority, in which the University of Szeged can play a key role. Furthermore, Zimonyi also believes that the target audience for Hungarian culture should be the Egyptian intellectuals and the middle class, given the fact that reaching out to the masses is not a realistic goal due to the scarcity of available financial resources (Kovács, 2013, pp. 91–94). Before Zimonyi took his office, translation among Arabic and Hungarian language literature had been halted for a long time. However, with his support, translation projects were relaunched, for example, Sherifa Kamel translated Dezső Kosztolányi's works, while Abdallah Abdel-Ati Al-Naggar wrote the first guide book about Hungary in Arabic. These works have been published in Cairo and became available in the capitals of other Arab countries, as well, which is a significant achievement *(Ektab.com,* n. d.).

In his application documents for the post of director of the Hungarian Cultural Institue in Cairo, the professor wrote, "First of all, it is important to define the cultural

values that a Hungarian cultural institute can represent in Egypt." On the one hand, this culture is obviously part of European culture, the general features of which are easy to recognize in the Egyptian context. On the other hand, it is a specific manifestation of European culture, with many unique features that link Hungarian culture to the East. I believe that the communication of the elements that highlight this particular "bridge role" of Hungarian culture, can be one of the specificities of the process of introducing Hungarian culture to Egypt. At the same time, and especially in this context, it is natural that the presentation of Hungarian culture in Egypt should be understood as the presentation of the universal Hungarian culture, including not only the culture of Hungarians living outside Hungary in the Carpathian Basin, but also the presentation of values (I am thinking of Hungarian artists and scholars living in different parts of the world) being important and outstanding in international terms (Zimonyi, 20 June 2007, p. 3). Looking through the above mentioned goals and ideas for developing cultural relations between the two countries, the professor has indeed led the institute based on these principles during his diplomatic mission and, as far as it was possible, managed to achieve many of the specific objectives (Zimonyi, 20 June 2007).

Summary

Overall, it can be stated that Arab–Hungarian, and especially Egyptian–Hungarian diplomatic and cultural relations have a long tradition, but they only began to take on an institutional framework in the 20th century, and their intensity increased mainly from the 1950s onwards. Recently, relations between the two countries can be considered good in all areas, and even though the economic, trade and political fields are the priority, significant progress has been made in the cultural and scientific sectors, as well, particularly with regard to film, music and education. By looking through the events of diplomatic history, it is a well-established statement that the success of the bilateral relations have been supported by the contribution of a number of prominent Hungarian people. One of them is Professor István Zimonyi, an outstanding scholar and researcher of the Arab world, language and culture, who, as the Director of the Hungarian Cultural Instiute in Cairo, has also directly contributed to the development of Egyptian–Hungarian cultural relations. Continuing his productive work in the future, as well, he will certainly contribute to even more achievments with the results of his research, and to the establishment of even more developed links between the two countries, but also between the whole Arab region and Hungary.

To conclude, I would like to quote a funny story from Professor Zimonyi's experiences as a cultural counsellor, in order to illustrate how difficult the work of developing relations between two countries with such different cultural backgrounds can be, and at the same time, how beautiful a mission it is for this same reason: 'Once we asked an Arab theatre company to perform Örkény's drama, the Cats' Play. The

local actors did perform it, but they put two cats on stage and compared their love story to those of humans.' (Autumn, 2014, pp. 11–12).

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributor

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The Connection between History and Economy in the Suez Canal[1][2]

Márk Alexander Gordon[3]

The Suez Canal,[4] established in 1869, is one of the most significant strategic and military artificial waterways in the world. In this book, twelve studies discuss the role and function of the Suez Canal from various points of view. Some of these essays were presented at a conference,[5] which marked the 150th anniversary of the Canal, while other studies are original contributions. This volume consists of a complex survey of the historical and economic circumstances necessitating the construction of the Suez Canal, which is being explained in four thematically separated chapters.

The editors of this book are Carmela Lutmar,[6] a social scientist, and Ziv Rubinoviz,[7] chair of the Department of Geo-strategy, at the University of Haifa. They clarify that the significance of their volume lies in the fact that no such systematic examination of the Canal has been don earlier. In the beginning of the volume, their research about the Canal's geostrategic importance as defined by the superpowers and regional actors is also included in the book. Several disciplines as well as a detailed survey examine the role of the most important artery and waterway for world trade between East and West.

The introduction provides a brief historical background on the Suez Canal, highlighting the ship routes that had existed before the Canal was constructed: *"The Sinan Peninsula connects Asia and Africa while separating the Mediterranean Sea from the Red Sea, and for thousands of years was making it hard to trade goods between South and Southeast Asia and Europe, forcing ships to circle around the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa"* (Lutmar and Rubinovitz, 2003, p. viii.). It is also mentioned that

[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.169

[2] The Suez Canal: Past Lessons and Future Challenges. Edited by: Carmela Lutmar and Ziv Rubinovitz. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2023. ISBN: 978-3-031-15670-0 pp. 280.

[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0384-7180; mgordon800@gmail.com

[4] According to a Washington Post article from 2016, nearly ten percent of global shipping passes in the Suez Canal:
Tharoor, I. (2021) 'The Suez Canal, a chokepoint of history,' Washington Post, 28 March. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/03/26/suez-canal-history/ (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
The book at this point also mentions a recent event in March 2021, when a cargo tanker, the Ever Given got stranded in the Canal.

[5] This unique conference was organized by the Chaikin Chair for Geostrategy at the University of Haifa, Israel, in November 2019.

[6] For more information and publication list of Carmela Lutmar, see:
University of Haifa (n. d.) *Carmela Lutmar.* Available at: https://cris.haifa.ac.il/en/persons/carmela-lutmar (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[7] For more information and publication list of Ziv Rubinovitz, see:
ResearchGate (n. d.) *Ziv Rubinovitz.* Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ziv-Rubinovitz (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

in the ancient times, the Egyptians had already built a Canal but it was disused. In the 18th century, Napoleon also thought about a Canal: his dream was fulfilled by Ferdinand de Lesseps, on November 17, 1869. This introductory chapter also analyses in detail the circumstances of the Canal's planning by Napoleon and Lesseps, its financial background, the status of the British Protectorate and the nationalization of the Canal by Gamal Abdel-Nasser in 1956, followed by the Tripartite Aggression against Egypt. The hostile situation with Israel, which lasted until 1979, is also examined. Moreover, this chapter proceeds with a concise section[8] on the role of the superpowers in the Suez Canal. In the next chapter, the book introduces the four parts of the book as well as their authors and contributors.

The first part, written by Shaul Chorev,[9] focuses on political, economic,[10] geopolitical,[11] and geostrategic issues,[12] including factors of threat such as terrorism. Ehud Gonen[13] gives information about the Chinese investments, while Yehuha Blanga[14] attempts to compare the Suez Canal and the Vietnam War, alongside with the Soviet supplies to North Vietnam. In the second part, Christopher Dietrich[15] discusses the energy, mostly, the oil situation, as related to the strategic thinking of the United States. Yossi Mann[16] portrays the economic impact of the Suez Canal with an emphasis on oil. In the third part, Benjamin Spanier[17] concentrates on legal aspects, such as the difference

[8] This section also mentions that the Canal would never have been built without the support of the great powers, such as France and Great Britain.
[9] Shaul Chorev is an admiral and the former Head of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, and also a professor in the International Relations Division of the School of Political Science:
University of Haifa (n. d.) *Shaul Chorev.* Available at: https://muchanut.haifa.ac.il/index.php/en/about-eng/first-row/researchers/item/19-chorev-shaul (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
[10] The alternation of Egypt's GDP is also discussed in this chapter.
[11] To increase the Canal's efficiency and increase the hard currency earnings, Egypt built a New Suez Canal, parallel to the old one and it was opened in 2015.
[12] An insightful pie chart displaying the seven types of ships and their amount passed through the Suez Canal in November 2019 can be also seen in this section. Further graphs indicate the traffic by ship type, as well.
[13] Ehud Gonen is Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Haifa and a Researcher at Haifa Maritime Policy and Strategy Research Center:
Academia (n. d.) *Gonen Ehud.* Available at: https://haifa.academia.edu/Ehud_GONEN (Accesed: 19 January 2024)
[14] Yehuda Blanga is a lecturer at Faculty of Jewish Studies, Bar Ilan University:
Bar-Ilan University (n. d.) *Yehuda Udi Blanga.* Available at:
https://cris.biu.ac.il/en/persons/yehuda-udi-blanga (Accessed: 19. January 2024)
[15] Christoper Dietrich is an Associate Professor of History, Fordham University:
Google Scholar (n. d.) *Christopher Dietrich.* Available at:
https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=ZR9OFvoAAAAJ&hl=en (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
[16] Yossi Mann studies at Bar Ilan University:
Google Scholar (n. d.) *Yossi Mann.* Available at:
https://scholar.google.co.il/citations?user=4FceSKkAAAAJ&hl=en (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
[17] Benny Spanier is a Senior Research Fellow at the Maritime Policy and Strategy Research Centre at the University of Haifa:
University of Haifa (n. d.) *Benny Spanier.* Available at:
https://cris.haifa.ac.il/en/persons/benny-spanier (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

between a canal and a strait.[18] Robbie Sabel[19] sums up Israel's right to pass through the Canal. Eitan Barak[20] analyses Israel's struggle to gain the freedom of passage in the Suez Canal between 1956 and 1967. The impact of the Suez Canal on human affairs and the environment is examined throughout the fourth chapter, written by Arnon Soffer,[21] including the urbanization and demographic policy of Egypt. Bella Galil[22] mentions the environmental print of the Canal. Semion Polinov[23] focuses on anthropogenic activity in the Mediterranean, and Aleksander Gerson[24] evaluates the consequences and the lessons of the six-day long congestion the cargo tanker called Ever Given caused, in March 2021. The editors are aware that not all articles explicitly address the Suez Canal, albeit this volume is fascinating because it addresses issues that go beyond history, such as environmental hazards and anthropogenic activity. In addition, the lessons of the chapter, as mentioned in the conclusion, may not be applied to other waterways.

This reviewed work definitely achieves its goal since it provides detailed studies carried out by distinguished scholars from different disciplines. The topics discussed, for example, the geopolitical and legal issues, are closely related to each other. The authors also employ useful graphs and maps, e.g., about the density of the population in the Mediterranean Sea Basin in 2008, or impact scores by ecoregions. One of the maps shows the shipping routes, whereas other thematic maps demonstrate environmental impacts. All of them are useful aids for the reader to expand their knowledge about the Suez Canal. One of the biggest strengths of this book is the elaborated presentation of the research results, which are summarized in the conclusion section entitled as 'What have we learned?' in five questions.[25] The concluding section also suggests directions for

[18] It is important to discuss the right to navigate through these types of waterways, and the maritime conventions.

[19] Robbie Sabel is a Professor of International Law, Faculty of Law Hebrew University, Jerusalem:
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (n. d.) *Robbie Sabel.* Available at:
https://en.law.huji.ac.il/people/robbie-sabel (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[20] Dr. Barak Eaton is a faculty member in the Program in Strategy, Diplomacy and Security, the Shalem College, Jerusalem:
The MirYam Institute (2019) *Eitan Barak.* Available at:
https://www.miryaminstitute.org/eitan-barak (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[21] Arnon Soffer is an Israeli geographer and professor of Geography and Environmental Sciences, Hebrew University:
Samuel Neaman Institute (n. d.) *Arnon Sofer.* Available at:
https://www.neaman.org.il/EN/Arnon-Sofer (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[22] Bella Galil works at the Steinhardt Museum of Natural History, Tel Aviv University: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bella-Galil

[23] Semion Polinov works as a Technicon at Israel Institute of Technology:
Research Gate (n. d.) *Semion Polinov.* Available at:
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Semion-Polinov (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[24] Aleksander Gerson is an associate professor at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst:
University of Massachusetts Amherst (n. d.) *Alexander R. Gerson.* Available at:
https://www.umass.edu/biology/about/directories/faculty/alexander-r-gerson (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[25] The answers are the historical development of the Suez Canal, the regional players, along with the Egypt Israel conflict, the increase of the volume of commodities, the future role of the Suez Canal decided in the hands of powers, and the challenges such as China's Belt and Road Initiative.

future research in four parts, entitled as Interaction, Strategies,[26] Intervention[27] and Stability.[28] It is necessary to prove the importance of the Suez Canal in an interdisciplinary work since connections between maritime history and security[29] are also examined in this book. The division of the studies into certain parts makes them more concise for the reader. The chapters themselves also end with a conclusion providing the most important result of the research.

One minor drawback of this volume is that the editors only summarize the main points of the chapters but they do not compare the various studies, for example, in what sense they are related to each other or which studies are the most practical for scholars. The interdisciplinary approach including several fields such as history, trading, geopolitics, environmental and anthropogenic activity, underlines the complexity of the problematics of the Suez Canal. The significance of this work lies in the fact that no such systematic examination of the Canal has been done earlier thus filling in the research gaps in the available literature. As stated before, the thorough analysis and detailed results as presented make this book an intriguing manual for both historians and scholars of other sciences.

[26] Redefining the concept of various strategies is considered to be a further goal of the research.
[27] Understanding great power politics are an important factor in this case. The editors also include the basic questions of the intervention of great powers.
[28] The editors discuss what should be implemented to reduce violence in the less stabile period of the trading.
[29] The current events in the Middle East are also mentioned to some extent.

The Reasons and Outcome of the Arab Uprisings[1][2]

Márk Alexander Gordon[3]

The conflicts and the discontents in the Middle East are primarily known for the Suez Crisis, the Arab-Israeli Wars, the Gulf Wars and the Islamic revolution.[4] In this book, however, a recent period of uprisings in three countries of the Arab region from December 2010 to 2014 is analysed as part of a research project.[5] As the title suggests, the countries under examination are Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. This study concentrates on the political, economic and social foundations of the uprisings, and how they changed, and it provides an in-depth outlining of the historical context of the uprisings as well as of their reasons and their aftermath.

This research has been carried out by three authors: Andrea Teti, Ph.D.,[6] Professor Pamela Abbott, [7] a sociologist, and Francesco Cavatorta. [8] Teti and Abbott work at the University of Aberdeen, in the United Kingdom and Cavatorta at the Laval University in Québec, Canada. They raise the following questions about the reasons of the rebellions: what kind of factors lead to the changes, how they were realized and whether they lead to democracy or authoritarianism, while making comparisons of the post-uprising situations. At this point, the research relies on several surveys.[9]

Each six chapter opens with an abstract containing background information on the events and outlines the objectives of the discussion. The first chapter gives a detailed description of the background of the rebellions as well as of the methodology of the investigation. Furthermore, a brief definition of the Arab Uprisings is also provided to clarify for the readers what they were about: "T*he Arab Uprisings represented a series of events of rare intensity in the history of the Middle East, as mass, popular and largely non-violent revolts took place, starting in December 2010".*[10]

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[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.170

[2] Andrea Teti, Pamela Abbott and Francesco Cavatorta: The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia: Social, Political and Economic Transformations. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017. ISBN 978-3-319-69044-5 pp. 153.

[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-0384-7180; mgordon800@gmail.com

[4] Suez Crisis: 1956; Arab-Israeli Wars: 1948, 1956, 1967, 1974; Gulf Wars: 1990-1991; Islamic Revolution: 1978-1979.

[5] This book was written as a part of the *Reform and Transition in the Mediterranean Series*, which provides studies of countries that has common roots. It addresses the structure of reform and tradition, the connection between politics, history and culture, and finally the strategic importance of the Mediterranean.

[6] For more information and publication list of Andrea Teti, see: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Andrea-Teti

[7] For more information and publication list of Pamela Abbott, see: https://www.abdn.ac.uk/people/p.abbott/

[8] For more information and publication list of Francesco Cavatorta, see: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Francesco-Cavatorta

[9] Arab Barometer, AfroBarometer (only Egypt and Tunisia), World Values Survey and Gallup World Poll are being used.

[10] Teti, A., Abbott, P. and Cavatorta, F. (2017) *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. Social, Political and Economic Transformations*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 2.

The next five chapters evaluate the uprisings. In the second one, the authors discuss the challenges[11] and the original causes of the rebellions, focusing on the social and economic circumstances of the population. These notions are also compared in the three given countries with a focus on corruption and internal security, and shows to what extent they affect and developed in the given country. The third chapter focuses on the political expectations and changes after the uprisings,[12] more exactly, on the commitment of certain citizens to democracy, on profound political changes, and on the attempt to find a connection between political expectations and religion.

The fourth chapter discusses the economic changes taking place between 2010 and 2014, the question of security, and the frustration of the population originating from the disappointment of the population. The fifth chapter sums up the problematics of employment, corruption, trust in the public institutions as well as and gender equality, including the empowerment of women.[13] The sixth one restates the main points of the previous chapters, relying both on empirical data and on results of surveys along with the authors' own viewpoint recapturing the problem of employment, governing service, corruption, earning the trust of the population and gender equality. The last section in this chapter presents international responses, which involve the problematic support of the EU and the US, and the badly implemented policies of the autocratic regimes.

The main strength of the research reveals itself in the conclusion chapter, which confirms the most important reasons of the uprisings as a complexity of multi-dimensional dissatisfaction in the countries under examination. The results of surveys are represented in several figures, which helps the reader achieve a better understanding of the analysis. The examination of women's situation was supported by data from OECD's Social Institutions, Gender Index, and by the volume[14] of Ronald Inglehart, [15] and the book[16] of Valentine Moghadam,[17] which helped the authors to compare the equality and economic situation of women and men between Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. The authors of this book called *The Arab Uprisings in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia* used graphs and charts displaying challenge levels and the current conditions of the three

[11] On the 44th page a useful chart shows the challenge rates in, certain countries.
[12] The authors also state in the Introduction of the third chapter that many scholars of the Middle East studies could not foresee the forthcoming of the Uprisings, because they focused too much on the developing of the authoritarian systems.
[13] The protection against violence against women and equality attempts are also mentioned in this section.
[14] Inglehart, R. (2017) 'Changing Values in the Islamic World and the West,' in Moaddel, M. and Gelfand, M. J. (eds.) *Values, Political Action, and Change in the Middle East and the Arab Spring.* New York: Oxford Academic, pp. 3-24. ISBN 9780190269098
[15] Ronald Inglehart, Professor Emeritus, was a politologist at the University of Michigan.
[16] Moghadam, V. (2014) 'Modernising Women and Democratisation After the Arab Spring,' *The Journal of North African Studies*, 19(2), p. 137–142.
[17] Valentine Moghadam is a Professor of Sociology and International Affairs at Northeastern University, Boston:
Northeastern University (n. d.) *Valentine M. Moghadam.* Available at:
https://cssh.northeastern.edu/faculty/valentine-moghadam/ (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

countries, relying on the work[18] of by Yuwa Hedrick-Wong[19] and Yasar Jarrar;[20] as well as the concern about threats to security including civil war and terrorism.

A brief information provided on the three countries[21] in the first chapter can also be regarded as useful for the readers. Furthermore, the authors cleverly compare the different opinions presented in the applied literature, such as Professor Mary Kaldor,[22] who holds the opinion that the uprisings can be looked upon as movement against the liberal democratic reforms and are similar to the anti-communist ones of in 1989. This is compared with the idea of Koenraad Bogaert,[23] who thinks that the protesters wanted to achieve liberal democracy but rejected the neoliberalism that is more depends on the state.

The second and sixth chapter discuss whether the citizens were aware of their real aims, along the cooperation with their political leaders at improving the living situation. More broadly, the goal to maintain the equilibrium in order to prevent the uprisings to be start again is also clarified. In the conclusion, the writers suggest that the concept of democracy and authoritarian rule should be redefined since the uprisings and their aftermath prove that it is not sufficient to view those systems in the usual way. In addition, other concepts like development and rebellion also need to be reconsidered, given the contradictions of democracy from the eighties and the connection between the lack of coherence and the inability of leaderships.

The only drawback of this volume is that in some places, for example, in the first two and the sixth chapters, certain sections are rather repetitive. Furthermore, in the sixth chapter, the international responses are not explained thoroughly enough while it also discusses the domestic issues. To sum up, the reader easily forgive these minor flaws, when getting to the conclusion which, once more, clarifies important notions that need redefining, such as democracy and authority. The Arab Uprisings are emerged from simultaneous economic, political and social problems, which caused discontent among the population.

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[18] Hedrick-Wong, Y., & Jarrar, Y. (2015) *Inclusive Growth in the Middle East and Africa: The Challenge of Transforming Burden to Dividends.* MasterCard, pp. 1-34. Available at: https://transformativesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/MasterCard-Inclusive-Growth-Report-2015.pdf (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[19] Yuwa Hedrick-Wong works as a chief economist at Harvard University:
Harvard University (n. d.) *Yuwa Hedrick-Wong.* Available at:
https://inclusive.growthlab.cid.harvard.edu/people/yuwa-hedrick-wong (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[20] Yasar Jarrar, Ph.D. is an economist and senior advisor at Negotiations Initiative, Harvard University:
Jarrar, Y. (2012) *Yasar Jarrar, PhD.* Available at:
http://yasarjarrar.com/ (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[21] Egypt is one of the most strategically and culturally significant Arab country, Jordan is also strategically important and although Tunis is not so major regarding its size and strategical terms, the reforms and development makes it worth mentioning.

[22] Professor Mary Kaldor works as a Director of the Conflict Research Programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science:
London School of Economics and Political Science (2024) *Professor Mary Kaldor.* Available at:
https://www.lse.ac.uk/ideas/people/mary-kaldor (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[23] Koenraad Bogaert is a lecturer at Ghent University, in the Department of Conflict and Development Studies (Belgium), and a member of the Middle East and North Africa Research Group (MENARG):
University of Ghent (2024) *Koenraad Boegart.* Available at:
https://www.jadaliyya.com/Author/3161 (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

The consequences of the rebellion as well as the attempt of the leaderships of the countries to find solution to it are presented in detail, therefore helping the reader to understand the causes of the uprisings and the functioning of the Arab World better. The comprehensive explanations, the historical and socio-economic problems make this book an intriguing and highly recommended manual for both scholars and general readers who wish learn more about the Arab Uprisings and its aftermath. This study also includes enough information to discuss the years following 2014.

Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East[1][2]

Shalu Joseph[3]

A revolution involves the unforeseen overthrow of powerful institutions. Resistance by social groupings and the general populace is a constant in revolution. *Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East: Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's Urabi Movement* is a very informative, insightful, and well-researched work on the impact of colonialism on middle eastern countries. It looks at the role colonialism played in igniting revolutionary movements across the region and emphasizes the colonial country's socio-economic and political dominion over the land, resources, and people of the colonies. The book's nine chapters, an introduction, and a conclusion give readers a better understanding of the many historical stages of Egypt's Urabi[4] revolution of 1882. The book exceeded its title because it thoroughly analyzed colonialism and Urabi movements as well as Egypt's sociocultural past.

Juan R I Cole[5] is a well-known American scholar and observer on South Asia and the modern Middle East. Cole has dedicated his professional life to comprehending the Middle East and the Muslim world in general, as well as to critically assessing how it interacts with the North Atlantic states. He is the author of a large number of books.[6] He was inspired to write this book by the popular perception of living and studying in Egypt. He contradicts the dominant elite view of the British conquest of Egypt. In this volume, the author examines historical instances or circumstances where social groupings or masses resistance resulted in social revolution. To address the topic of how the revolutionary movement in Egypt began and developed, it focuses on the socioeconomic and political predominance of the colonial power. Additionally, it examines how nationalist and Islamist beliefs influenced these revolutionary

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[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.165

[2] Juan R. I. Cole: Colonialism and Revolution in the Middle East, Social and Cultural Origins of Egypt's Urabi Movement. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992. ISBN 0-691-05683-8. pp. 341.

[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9010-395X; josephshalu24gmail.com

[4] Urabi or Ahmed Urabi was a military officer and nationalist leader who played a significant role in the revolution of 1882.

[5] For more information about the author, see:
Cole, J. R. I. (n. d.) Juan Cole: Home Page. Available at: http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrcole/jcpers.htm (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
Cole, J. R. I. (n. d.) Curriculum Vitae. Available at: https://umich.academia.edu/JuanCole/CurriculumVitae (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

[6] The renowned books of the author:
Cole, J. R. I. (ed.) (2021) *Peace Movements in Islam: History, Religion, and Politics.* London, New York, Dublin: I. B. Taurus, Bloomsbury Publishing. ISBN 978-0755643189
Cole, J. R. I. (2018) *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace Amid the Clash of Empires.* New York: Nation Books. ISBN 978-1568587820
Cole, J. R. I. (2014) *The New Arabs: How the Millennial Generation is Changing the Middle East.* New York: Simon and Schuster. ISBN 978-1-4516-9039-2

movements. The author begins his work by providing an insight into the historical background about the history of Egypt. The Urabi movement of 1882 is the central theme of this book. The Urabi Revolution was a conglomeration of revolutions occurring at the same time as resentments toward an exploiting social group grew within each stratum and eventually challenged the state, whose moment of weakness allowed the very circumstance that caused its collapse.

In an effort to explain a revolution, the author defines four approaches or explanatory components that worked together, which include social structure, which is the constitution of socio-economic classes; organization, which is more focused or stressed by resource mobilization theories; ideology, highlighted by Webstarian and social historians of ideas; and finally conjecture, the way in which events in one social sphere have an unexpected impact on other groups. He also mentions the central explanatory idea of sociologist Theda Skocpol[7] in state and social relations. He then goes on to create a new story and elevate historical narratives. He believed that the Urabi Revolt was an uprising against the Ottoman Empire and colonial European powers. According to Cole, the revolution was the result of the events that occurred in Egypt over a three-decade period rather than an unexpected event.

Each chapter analyzes various facets of Egyptian culture and politics in the middle of the nineteenth century rather than providing a chronological account. The book can be divided into three sections. The first section analyzes the competing elites against which the protest movement formed, as well as socio-cultural shifts and state policies that have fueled political unrest. The next section focuses on the revolution, the political outlooks of various social strata, public tensions, conflicts between locals and colonialists, etc. The third section discusses political rebellion, including its relationship to speculative indigenous revolutions and British occupation.

It can also be considered a subaltern approach because he gives great importance to studying the role of the common man in the outbreak of this revolt. He points out that the growing intelligentsia, which included ulemas,[8] professors, clerks, junior military officers, and journalists, was crucial in mobilizing the public. Cole characterizes the Urabi movement as a complete revolution with enormous popular support, in contrast to the western writers who see it as a protest or resistance by the subordinate military officers with weaker popular support. Many western writers considered it a minor revolt, not a massive revolution. Cole's analysis rejects the western view. The unforeseen convergence of these protesting groups led to the revolution. Each social group had its own surroundings, grievances, and goals. The movement was initially supported by Syrian Christians and large landowners. Even coffee shops played a significant role.

[7] Theda Skocpol is an American sociologist and political scientist who made a great contribution to comparative politics and historical institutions.
[8] Muslim scholars or men of authority in religion and law.

One of the major strengths of this book is that it makes considerable use of primary materials, including documents and manuscripts from the Egyptian National Archives, reports from the Arabic press, manuscripts from the Egyptian National Library, documents from the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, and records from the British Foreign Office. Second, it places a strong emphasis on the revolution's social and cultural aspects. Thirdly, he also incorporates literary criticism into his argument. Fourthly, the inclusion of comparative studies, which include the works of Theda Skocpol, Charles Tilly,[9] George Rude,[10] Benedict Anderson,[11] etc., is highly convincing. Fifth, an analysis of the years immediately preceding the 1882 event that spans three decades.

One of the main criticisms of this work is its extensive use of technical terminologies and theories, which the general reader may find difficult to understand. He incorporates the theories of many historians, sociologists, philosophers, and scholars. Secondly, the author's lively manner can occasionally come off as overly casual, especially in a work this dense. There are some typographical errors in the book. When Cole uses terminology like "neocolonialism" and "informal empire" interchangeably, it can be confusing because he also uses the term in a context from the 19th century.

Despite these small issues, Cole has written a fascinating and contentious book about nineteenth-century Egyptian history. This work is a remarkable and insightful study of colonialism and Urabi movement in Egypt. This book analyzes all aspect such as the socio-political, economic, cultural, and military factors instead of giving too much importance to Urabi, the one who played a significant role in the revolution. The majority of the discussions will likely take place in the context of the western discourse on middle eastern history, where Cole's contribution got a huge welcome. This study will reveal new avenues and will serve as a welcome catalyst for additional research.

[9] Charles Tilly is an America sociologist and Political scientist who made a great study on thee relationship between politics and society.
[10] George Rude is a British Historian Who focuses on French Revolution and 'History from Below.'
[11] Benedict Anderson is a political scientist who is best known for his book Imagined Communities.

The Politics of Identity Shaping in the Middle East[1][2]

Shalu Joseph[3]

This book is a highly incisive, instructive, and well-researched work that explores the impact of Islam on twentieth-century Egypt. Every public discussion of the constitution, the law, civil rights, and cultural identity places Islam at the center. It examines how Islam operated in Egypt in the 20th century. One of the most divisive topics in contemporary Middle Eastern society is the place of Islam in the state. Every public discussion of the Constitution, the law, civil rights, and the very nature of cultural identity centers on it. Through the lens of Egypt in the 20th century, Meir Hatina sheds light on Islam in the state. He traces the development of Egyptian liberalism throughout the first half of the 20th century, its suppression in the wake of the July 1952 Revolution, and its resurgence in post-revolutionary Egypt under the leadership of individuals like Faraj Fuda.[4] Identity Politics highlights the aggressive aspect of the Islamic struggle and the ambition to transform the state by forging a close link between religion and politics, which has huge impact on all Middle Eastern states in the modern era.

Meir Hatina[5] is a well-known academician and a distinguished researcher who has made a major contribution to the history of the Middle East. He is a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His primary academic interest is comparative studies of the political and intellectual history of the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries, with a special focus on Islamic politics and in relation to Western and Jewish philosophy. He produced an excellent knowledge of the influence of Islam and its indispensable role in Egypt in all fields as well as of the history of the Middle East. The book is interwoven with primary and secondary documents.

The *Identity Politics in the Middle East* consists of an introduction, and nine chapters followed by a conclusion. The volume can be divided broadly into three sections. The first section provides background information and analyses Egyptian liberalism and the religious awakening in post-Nasserist Egypt. In the second section, the author analyses Faraj Fuda's concept of religion and state. Faraj Fuda, one of the most

[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.166
[2] Meir Hatina, Identity Politics in the Middle East, Liberal Thoughts and Islamic Challenges in Egypt, ISBN-9781845111359, London: Tauris, 2007, pp. 264.
[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9010-395X; josephshalu24@gmail.com
[4] Faraj Fuda was a writer, secular thinker and one of the pioneers of the Enlightenment in Egypt and the Arab World.
Oxford Reference (2024) Fuda, Faraj Ali (1945-1992). Available at: https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780195382075.001.0001/acref-9780195382075-e-0684 (Accessed: 19 January 2024)
[5] For more details about the author:
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2023) Meir Hatina. Available at: https://en.islamic-mideast.huji.ac.il/people/meir-hatina (Accessed: 19 January 2024)

notable liberals in post-revolutionary Egypt, is the subject of analysis in one section of the book. More broadly, the discussion explores the growth of Egyptian liberalism, which originally appeared in the first half of the 20th century but was suppressed after the revolution of July 1952.[6]

Additionally, he focuses on Fuda's liberal outlook and the need to overcome the Islamic issue. Meir Hatina compares and contrasts the liberal crisis in the third section, putting the Wasat party[7] and inclusive politics in the spotlight. The work provides an Egyptian perspective insight into the subject of Islam in the state during the 20th century. Egypt is a remarkable case study with significant implications for understanding the Middle Eastern discourse on religion and the state as it has long traditionally shaped cultural trends in the Arab world. The term "Islamism," sometimes known as "political Islam," refers to socio-political movements that use religious ideals and symbols to sway public opinion and establish an Islamic form of government in the Middle East, either in peaceful or coercive means.

The word "liberalism" also evokes a methodological challenge. It lacks ideologies and economic foundations that created the Western liberal tradition. This book focuses mainly on the ideological conflict with the sensitive and emotionally charged subject of Islam in the state throughout modern Egypt's history. Islam was seen as the only religion, according to Islamic politics, could authoritatively and logically address Egypt's social ills and inherent religiosity. The administration was compelled into an intellectual predicament that revealed its incapacity to influence public discourse in the face of a more deep-rooted narrative.

The author uses a sociological approach in this book. While authoring this work, he draws on both primary and secondary sources. He wrote this book using personal interviews, memoirs, journals, and archival information. For the purpose of authoring this work, he conducted numerous illustrious interviews. One of the drawbacks of this work is that Hatina did not conduct a thorough analysis of Fuda's intellectual aspects. Also, there is insufficient analysis of Fuda's perception of secularism, liberal government ideas, and political concerns. Besides these small issues, the book will be helpful for students and scholars, and even ordinary people interested in the intellectual history of twentieth-century Egypt and the debates between liberal and Islamic intellectual currents. Meir Hatina narrates the socio-economic cultural and religious aspects in a brilliant way. The book is written in a simple way that is easy for wider audience to understand. This work can be considered one of the important sources for the study of the role of Islam in the political as well as social spheres of Egypt.

[6] The revolution took place from July 22 to July 26, 1952, under the leadership of Muhammad Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser which resulted in the overthrow of King Farouk, whom the military blamed for Egypt's poor performance in the 1948 war with Israel.
[7] A moderate Islamist political party in Egypt.

New Media Discourses, Culture and Politics after the Arab Spring [1][2]

Alexandra Batonai[3]

The *Arab Spring* is a series of anti-government protests and revolts in the Middle East and North Africa, that began in 2010. Although the demonstrations were not equally successful in all countries, they all had the same objective: to express the economic and political grievances of the populace and to obtain social justice and democratic rights. Revolutionaries used the social media as a platform to mobilise the public and organise rebellions, hence it is indisputable that the social media played a particularly important role during the *Arab Spring*. Moreover, they also gave space to the subsequent online activism, that perpetuated the spirit of the *Spring* events. It is worth to explore how the situation has changed ten years after the uprisings with respect to human rights, politics, nationalism, identity, and public spaces; and how the media has contributed to these alterations. The *New Media Discourses, Culture and Politics after the Arab Spring: Case Studies from Egypt and Beyond* examines this topic from a scholarly perspective, seeking to dispel the clichés about the revolution.

The book was originally published in London by I. B. Tauris Publishing Company in 2022. Later it was reprinted in New York, Oxford, New Delhi, and Sydney. This project was made possible by the support of the Qatar National Research Fund.[4] The volume consists of ten articles written by prominent international scholars[5] and was edited by two distinguished academics: Dr Eid Mohamed[6] and Dr Aziz Douai.[7]In the introduction the editors provide the reader with a historiographic overview about the former studies regarding the *Arab Spring* and scrutinise three crucial themes: (1) the phenomenon of continuity and change in the Arab Uprisings, (2) the change in people's daily life following the Spring, (3) and a critique of dominant narratives about the change in the region. The end of the introduction includes a concise summary of each chapter.

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[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.167

[2] Aziz Douai - Eid Mohamed (eds.): New Media Discourses, Culture and Politics after the Arab Spring: Case Studies from Egypt and Beyond. London: I. B. Tauris, 2022. ISBN 978-0-7556-4051-5. pp. 267.

[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7826-9348; batonaiszandi@gmail.com

[4] It was established by the Qatari royal family to support original, competitively selected research projects.

[5] The authors of the book are Dr Aziz Douai, Dr Eid Mohamed, Dr Sahar Khamis, Dr Ehab H. Gomaa, Dina Abdel-Mageed, Dr Grant Bollmer, Dr Mustafa Menshawy, Azza El Masri, Dr Safa Elnaili, Dr Touria Khannous, and Hasnaa Mokhtar.

[6] Mohamed is an assistant professor of Arab - US cultural policy in the Comparative Literature Program at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies.

[7] Douai is professor of journalism and the dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Regina.

Chapter 2 examines ways of countering gender violence in the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, through the example of 'the Nude Revolution' and makes a comparison between it and the 'SlutWalk'[8] in the Western areas. Even though women's rights were not the focus of the Arab Uprisings, the *Spring* raised the issues of women and their role in Arab societies. Nonetheless, the demonstrations had a tremendous drawback: in some countries female protesters were subjected to sexual harassment and physical abuse. In response to these horrible events, the Egyptian activist Aliaa Elmahdy[9] launched a new movement by posting her naked pictures online in 2011, with the message that her body belongs only to her. Soon, other Arab female activists, such as Tunisian Amina Sboui[10] started to follow this trend and created the so-called 'Nude Revolution'. The purpose of this section is to determine whether radical feminist activism can be effective in the MENA region, by scrutinising the general reception of the social media contents of the above-mentioned feminist revolutionaries in the Arab world.

Chapter 3 seeks a response to the question "*Do Egyptians still care about the Arab Spring*?" In order to provide a research-based answer to this question, the authors of this study conducted both a quantitative and qualitative analysis based on approximately 120,000 news articles from the well-known Egyptian newspaper, Almasry Alyoum.[11] Thus, they gained a better understanding about how much Egyptians are still interested in the *Arab Spring*. The methodology of this research is multifarious. Emad Mohamed[12] and Eid Mohamed used morphological analysis, topic modelling, feature extraction, regression analysis, statistics, and topic association, among others.

Chapter 4 explains the context of the Egyptian political scene and reconstructs the history of the two major political actors in Egypt: The Muslim Brotherhood and the young revolutionaries. It explores how the two oppositional communities define themselves and tries to determine their identities by analysing their blog posts, online articles and press releases published between 2009 and 2016. The authors describe how these groups have changed the frames they use to identify themselves before, during, and after the *Arab Spring*.

Chapter 5 studies how online Islamic discourse can replicate offline authoritarian power structures. Dina Abdel-Mageed[13] and Grant Bollmer[14] examine the Facebook contents of famous Sunni Muslim preachers between 2013 and 2016 to show how they

[8] SlutWalk was a series of demonstrations organised in several parts of the world to protest against blaming women's attire for sexual violence.
[9] Aliaa Elmahdy is an Egyptian internet activist, who fights for women's rights.
[10] Amina Sboui is a Tunisian women's rights activist, who became famous by posting her nude photograph on Facebook with the message that "*My body is mine and not the source of anybody's honour*."
[11] in English translation: The Egyptian Today.
[12] Emad Mohamed is Senior Lecturer in Computational Linguistics and Translation Technology at the University of Wolverhampton
[13] Dina Abdel-Mageed is a PhD candidate at the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.
[14] Dr Grant Bollmer is Associate Professor of Media Studies at North Carolina State University.

use their religious speech to justify the existing social order in the Arab world, and especially in Egypt. They argue that the persuasive power of religion is able to maintain the hegemonic power relations.

Chapter 6 unravels the 'revolution of pronouns' in interviews and autobiographies of former Muslim Brotherhood members, correlating with shifts in power and resistance within the organisation. In his research paper, Mustafa Menshawy[15] proves his hypothesis that there is a connection between the Muslim Brotherhood's usage of the pronoun 'I' or 'we" and the changing of the political situation.

Chapter 7 represents the importance of the well-known, independent, digital pan-Arab website, Raseef22,[16] set up in 2013, as the voice of the *Arab Spring*. The original goal of this platform was to create an online safe space after the Arab Uprisings, where youth can share their perspectives on Arab realities without fear of censorship and persecution. This study engages with Habermas's concept of the role of mass media in the public sphere and explores how the internet can provide a space for deliberative democracy. It analyses twelve articles from Raseef22 to show the nature of the public sphere emerging through this website. Subsequently, it concludes that Raseef22 has succeeded in preserving the spirit of the *Arab Spring*; and due to its linguistic hybridity, journalistic talents, and broad Arab and global audience, it could serve as an example for government-owned Arab media platforms to follow in the future.

Chapter 8 studies how Islamists and nationalists in Libya promoted their concepts of nationalism via Facebook after the downfall of the Qaddafi regime[17] in 2011. It also outlines the cyber battles of the two main opposing political orientations and examines their Facebook posts through critical discourse analysis. The article proves that Facebook plays a crucial role in the formation of Libyans' national identity.

Chapter 9 provides a scholarly critique of Hanan Abdallah's documentary, "In the Shadow of a Man." This film shows us the life of four different Egyptian women (Wafaa, Badreya, Suzanne and Shahinda) from a feminist perspective, and it highlights the social, political, and economic struggles of Arabic women through their stories. Concomitantly, it familiarises the viewer with the historical context and the biggest challenges of the 2011 revolution. The main characters symbolise females with different ideological backgrounds. All of them embodies distinct types of Egyptian feminism, such as traditional, liberal, socialist, and religious. The documentary emphasises the diversity of Egyptian women and strives to promote their position in politics.

[15] Dr Mustafa Menshawy is a former BBC reporter, who has joined to the Lancaster University's SEPAD (Sectarianism, Proxies and De-Sectarianisation) in 2021.
[16] Its name means sidewalk22 in English, referring to the twenty-two Arab countries.
[17] 1969-2011

Finally, in the last chapter Hasnaa Mokhtar[18] studies the double-edged effect of the technical revolution in the Arab Gulf through the examples of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. On the one hand, the online spaces can provide avenues for individuals and social movements to initiate local grassroots activism; but on the other hand, the states endeavour to gain supervision over these new online platforms to exert power and control over national public discourses. Beyond that, the new websites may reinforce gendered state violence. Last but not least, the researcher draws the readers' attention to the fact that the situation in the Arab Gulf countries is more complicated than the Western media portrays it. She argues that is vital to allow the untold stories of minority feminists to emerge alongside the narratives of elitist feminists.

Overall, the *New Media Discourses, Culture and Politics after the Arab Spring: Case Studies from Egypt and Beyond* places the complex and multi-layered interactions between media, culture, and social protests before and after the *Arab Spring* in a new context. The strengths of this study are multiple. All of its articles are well-organised and follow a logical structure. Due to the vast array of authors, its content is protean. It is possible to claim that "*the book's diversity of views and approaches is a testament to the diversity of the Arab world*" (p. 29.). Its language is not unnecessarily overcomplicated. Although each work in this volume is very thorough and state-of-the-art, the book remains understandable and exciting for the wider audience too. For this reason, I would warmly recommend it to everyone, who is interested in the history of MENA countries and feminist movements.

[18] Hasnaa Mokhtar is Postdoctoral Associate at Rutgers University's Center for Women's Global Leadership. She is also an activist, who fights again gender-based violence.

The Fight for the Middle East[1][2]

Damir Iskaliev[3]

The Fight for the Middle East is a powerful study of the prominent Russian historian Alexei Vasiliev, who has devoted his research to the phenomenon of the «Arab Spring» and aspects of the transformation process of the Greater Middle East in modern times. According to the author, the particular topicality of this study is due to the fact that in recent years this region has had the greatest potential for conflict and is characterized by acute socio-political contradictions both in the Middle Eastern societies within national states and between the countries of the region. However, the chronological framework of the book is not limited to the events of the "Arab Spring" itself, which allows the author to consider modern political processes in the region, to assess changes taking into account the current political situation. Vasiliev states that it is extremely difficult to characterize the process of political regime change in the region as a kind of Arab revolution since it has resulted in the rise to power of pro-Western liberal forces rather than of radical Islamic supporters. In Egypt, these forces were able to lead the social movement for a short period but, as the author wrote: "…they could not cope with this power, solve social problems, and collapsed under the pressure of competitors in the face of the armed forces and a number of Gulf states."[4]

What is more, the author tends to refute the purely economic reasons that gave rise to the "Arab Spring", noting the need for a comprehensive examination of the political situation and local conditions in each of the countries of the region. Thus, while there was direct foreign intervention in Libya, the confrontation in Yemen was caused by intra-clan conflicts. In the introduction part, the author examines the contradictions underlying regional processes in the Middle East, "…which significantly change not only the political landscape but also the entire socio-political and psychological picture of the Middle East and North Africa."[5] At the same time, Vasiliev starts from an interpretation of the political processes in the Middle East that focuses on the specificities of each country's development. In this way, he allows us to cover the main actors of the region.

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[1] DOI: https://doi.org/10.59569/jceeas.2023.3.2.173

[2] Vasiliev A.: The Fight for the Middle East. Lenand: Moscow, 2019. ISBN 978-5-9710-6798-6. pp. 256.

[3] PhD Candidate at the Eötvös Loránd University; ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5742-6455; qwerty.iskaliev@mail.ru

[4] Originally: "…не смогли справиться с этой властью, решить социально- политические проблемы, и рухнула под напором конкурентов в лице вооруженных сил и поддерживающих эти силы рядом государств Персидского залива." p. 8.

[5] Originally: "…которые существенно меняют не только политический пейзаж, но и всю социально-политическую и психологическую картину Ближнего и Среднего Востока и Северной Африки." p. 10.

Vasiliev Alexei completed his studies at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, majoring in the Middle East region. From 1971 to 1975, he was a political observer in Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan.[6] He also covered the Arab-Israeli war of 1973. From 1975 to 1979, he was the newspaper's correspondent in Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Yemen and Ethiopia. The prominent scholar defended his Ph.D. thesis on *Wahhabism and the first Saudi state in Arabia.* Later, he was appointed as Director of the Institute for African studies. During his doctoral studies, Vasiliev gained experience of exchange studies at Cairo University. He devoted the first chapter to Egypt, referring to the political events of 2011 - 2013, which led to two violent changes of power in the country. This power transition process took place with the active support of Saudi Arabia, which, as the author mentions: "…With the help of the Egyptian military and economic elite, succeeded in overthrowing the Ikhwan regime of Morsi."[7]

Much of his work is dedicated to the countries of the Middle East and Africa.[8] Moreover, the author's interest was devoted to the Russian Federation's relations with the countries of the Middle East. One of these books written by Alexei is "*From Lenin to Putin, Russia in the Middle East*." In his assessments of the Soviet period, the main idea of the author is that the Soviet foreign policy in the region was based on two foundations: ideological messianism[9] and the national interests of the country. These two trends sometimes coincided, but more often came into conflict. The most striking example, which the author elaborates in detail, is the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Alexei Vasiliev was the first to investigate the phenomenon of «Wahhabism» in Soviet Union and then in Russia, whose ideology became the basis of extremist Islamic doctrines in the 20th and 21st centuries.

"*The Fight for the Middle East*" is a well-structured book. It consists of 7 chapters. As positively mentioned earlier, Vasiliev placed the emphasis of the book on the specifities of the country's development. Each chapter is a series of essays on each of the major players of the region. This book has its advantages and disadvantages. Among the disadvantages, the need for more detailed coverage of Russia's political role in the processes described, should be dealt with more details (for example, in chapter 4 "The Syrian crisis" there is a lack of information about Russia's political interests in the region). Also, the author mainly used Russian/Soviet sources. Based on the above, the book lacks a comparative analysis, it would be useful for the reader to see more international sources. Among the positive aspects of the work is the author's detailed analysis of the factors influencing the nature and causes of the "Arab Spring". It is worth mentioning

[6] Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science (n. d.) *Vasilev Aleksey Mikhailovich.* Available at: https://www.inafran.ru/node/120 (Accessed: 1 April 2023)

[7] Originally: "…удалось руками египетских военных и экономически х элит добиться свержения ихванского режима М. Мурси" p. 35.

[8] RUDM University (n. d.) Vasiliev *A. M.: List of Records.* Available at: https://repository.rudn.ru/ru/authors/author/5793/ (Accessed 20 March 2023)

[9] Ideological messianism, i.e., the task was to extend the Soviet structure and ideology to the countries of the region

the non-membership of the author, he doesn't belong to either side of the political bloc. Acknowledging the role of an external factor, namely, Western propaganda, he rejects the "conspiracy theory", well-circulated in the Russian mass media, as if the Arab revolutions were orchestrated in Washington.

The timeliness of the work is undeniable, in which the author consistently analyzes and classifies the phenomenon of the «Arab Spring», supplementing his conclusions with practical material. The book is written at a high academic level, and its structure consistently reflects the logic of the research. It should be noted that the author's research approach focuses on a number of fundamental issues in the modern socio-political history of the Arab countries, as well as the role of religion in political struggle and social shifts in the countries of the Middle East. It is worth mentioning that the book is written in clear language, not overloaded with excessively specialized terminology. The author's conclusions after each chapter are quite reasonable. The reviewed study should be of interest not only to historians but also to a wide readership. The research material may be of interest not only in the history of region but also in political science and international relations.

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