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The Dismissal of A.J. Wensinck from the Royal Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo

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THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND THE TRAINING OF
MUSLIM CLERGY IN EUROPE

Cover illustration: Ibn Rushd, also known by the Latinized name as Averroës, was a Muslim scholar in the Middle Ages (Cordóba, c. 1126-Marakesh, c. 1198). Detail of fresco *Triumph of St Thomas and Allegory of the Sciences*, in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, by the Florentine painter Andrea da Firenze (Andrea Bonaiuti; flourished between 1343-1377).

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**The Study of Religion and the Training of
Muslim Clergy in Europe**

Academic and Religious Freedom in the 21st Century

Edited by
Willem B. Drees,
Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld

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The fresco *Triumph of St Thomas and Allegory of the Sciences* in the Church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence, by the Florentine painter Andrea da Firenze (Andrea Bonaiuti; flourished between 1343-1377). Ibn Rushd is depicted with two other 'defeated heretics', Sabellius and Arius, sitting at the feet of Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224-1274). Photo Credit: Corbis.

Europe paid a bloody price to reach the point of democracy and human rights that we have now. See I am here in Leiden – speaking as a grand mufti, freely and academically in Europe [...]

How many generations had to pay the price to ensure that Ibn Rushd is not positioned underneath Thomas of Aquino anymore? Now he is here, with his picture telling me: This is your predecessor, your great grandfather. You should be proud of him and place him above instead of below. So know how much blood had to be shed for the Europeans to be ready to come to this stage. And because of that the Europeans do not allow anyone to break these democracy and human rights rules.

*Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in an interview with the Nederlands Islamitische Omroep, aired March 4, 2007, on the occasion of the conference *Academic Freedom and Religious Freedom: Tensions and Compromises in the Coexistence of Two Fundamental Rights* held in Leiden on 27 and 28 February 2007.*



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Preface and acknowledgements

In September 2006, the Faculty of Religious Studies of Leiden University – itself a public university – started a bachelor and master programme in Islamic Theology. This development formed a major incentive to organize a conference on *Academic Freedom and Religious Freedom: Tensions and Compromises in the Coexistence of Two Fundamental Rights*, held on 27 and 28 February 2007 in Leiden in the most interesting setting of *Naturalis*, a museum of natural history. The volume presented here offers most of the lectures and a few additional contributions, invited to provide a more balanced consideration of recent developments in the training of imams in Europe. The training of Muslim clergy in the context of modern academic life was a major dimension of the conference, correlating with the recent establishment of the programme of Islamic Theology in the Faculty of Religious Studies. However, this was a sub-theme in the conference as a whole, as questions of the combination of confessional and academic identity gave rise to more general reflections on academic freedom, religious freedom, and the academic study of religion in contemporary contexts.

The Minister of Education at the time of preparation, Mrs. Maria van der Hoeven, had addressed on various occasions, both in the Netherlands and abroad, issues of religion, higher education, and the development of Islam in European and other contexts. Her interest in these issues provided an additional stimulus for the conference. As she left office as Minister of Education when a new cabinet took office just a week before the conference, she did not participate in the conference itself. However, we want to express our gratitude to the Minister and to the staff of the Ministry of Education for financial and moral support when organizing this conference.

The editors also want to express their thanks to two assistant editors, Abdurraouf Oueslati and Anne Marieke Schwencke, who did a most substantial amount of work both in preparation for the conference and in the editorial process resulting in this book, as well as the translation of the German contribution of Ednan Aslan. Without their efforts the book would not have been the way it is, nor would it have arrived at the time it does. We also thank the staff of Leiden University Press for their cooperation in producing this book on an issue of genuine relevance in our time.

Leiden, November 27, 2007

Willem B. Drees and Pieter Sjoerd van Koningsveld

4 The Dismissal of A. J. Wensinck from the Royal Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo

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One of the most critical episodes in the history of Dutch orientalism concerns the dismissal of the Leiden Professor of Semitic Languages Arent Jan Wensinck (1882-1939) from the Royal Academy of the Arabic Language in Cairo in 1933. Wensinck's nomination as a member at the Academy coincided with the appearance of the Arabic translation of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam (EI)*.² His articles 'Ibrāhīm' and 'Ka'ba' in the *EI* were not in agreement with Islamic traditions on this subject, and were considered as disrespectful in many Muslim religious circles. After an anti-orientalist press campaign, launched mostly by religious activists, Wensinck's appointment in the Academy was revoked.³



Arent Jan Wensinck (1882-1939), professor of Semitic Languages at Leiden University. Photo credit: Leids Universitair Archief.

The number of Wensinck's articles in the *EI* is very impressive in part because he often undertook work for which he could not find a suitable author.⁴ Under the entry 'Ibrāhīm', he summarized the thesis of his master Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936) in his dissertation *Het Mekkaansche Feest* (the Meccan Feast).⁵ Snouck Hurgronje never attempted to translate his dissertation, but his ideas became more widely known through Wensinck's supplementary work. The sensitivity of the historical analysis around the figure Ibrāhīm in Egypt dates back to the well-known case of Tāha Husayn, almost seven years before the publication of Wensinck's ideas. Husayn probably adopted Snouck Hurgronje's views, and was also aware of A. Sprenger's theory. In its general outlines, this theory argues that focused emphasis became placed on Abraham in the Quran, only after Muhammad migrated to Medina, and not before the outbreak of the dispute between himself and the local Jewish community. In this manner, Abraham was presented as the forerunner of Muhammad, precursor of Islam and preacher of pure monotheism. This would have allowed Muhammad to claim the priority of Islam over Judaism and Christianity. The reason behind the acceptance of this conception of Abraham was primarily designed to provide the Prophet with a new means to demonstrate the independence of the Islamic faith *vis-à-vis* Judaism and to present Islam from that time onwards as the originally revealed religion.⁶

This particular stage of Wensinck's career formed the main impetus behind the heated polemics among Muslims in Egypt about his orientalist views, the scholarly nature of the *EI*, and orientalism in general, that will be discussed in this article. Ronen Raz notes that the critical reading of orientalism and the extensive Arab commentary on it reached a peak in the 1930s. Arab intellectuals saw an increased Arab interest in the study of orientalism, but at the same time a growing public debate about orientalists, their intentions, the quality of their scholarship and their impact on the Arab discourse. Intellectuals with different positions and from different groups participated in the public debate, which took place mostly in journals across the Arab world.⁷

Since its establishment, the Egyptian University invited Italian, French, English and German orientalists to join its academic staff. King Fu'ād exploited his contact with royalty and statesmen in Europe to enlist orientalists to teach. He also chose European historians to publish archival documents pertaining to his ancestors, and to write multivolume histories going back to the times of the pharaohs.⁸

It is worth mentioning that I. Goldziher and Snouck Hurgronje were among the only orientalists who declined Egypt's invitation to teach at its

university.⁹ Wensinck's case, however, was the only one which directly involved the dismissal of an orientalist from an Egyptian academic institution. However, other local scholars (who mostly incorporated orientalist investigations in their works) caused similarly intense cultural controversies. The earliest controversy resulted in the dismissal of the Greek Orthodox historian and journalist Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914) – due to his writings on the history of Islam – from the recently founded Egyptian University in 1910.¹⁰ Another famous controversy followed the publication of ʿAlī ʿAbd ar-Rāziq's book, in which he called for separation of religious and political authority in Islam.¹¹ The following year witnessed the publication of Tāha Husayn's work *Pre-Islamic Poetry*, in which he questioned the language of the Quran and its relation with pre-Islamic Arabic. The appearance of the work provoked a storm of hostile criticism, and demands were made to dismiss the author from his post as a teacher at the Egyptian University.¹²

Based on different archival materials, this paper will discuss the historical background of the issue and its impact on Egyptian-Dutch diplomatic relations, the role taken by Wensinck's orientalist colleagues in the Academy, and the repercussions of the crisis as reflected in Muslim views on Wensinck and the *EI* in Egypt.

Apart from a few letters and his diary on his journey to the East (end of 1929 to early 1930) found in the Leiden University Library, Wensinck's whole collection of private papers was not preserved. During one of his research trips to Morocco (1986), the Dutch professor P. S. van Koningsveld of Leiden University bought a collection of the personal archive of Wensinck's French colleague in the Academy Louis Massignon (1883-1962). It includes correspondences between Wensinck and other Western nominees on their attempts to appeal to the Egyptian government to withdraw its decision of dismissal.¹³ Similar correspondences are also found in the collection of the German member of the Academy August Fischer (1865-1949), in the Bibliothek der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Martin Luther University in Halle (Saale).¹⁴ The most significant primary source for the historical background of the crisis is, however, the dossier of the Dutch Consulate in Cairo preserved at the National Archive in The Hague. These materials contain correspondences between the Dutch Chargé d'Affaires in Cairo C.H.J. Schuller tot Peursum,¹⁵ and the office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.C.D. de Graef (1872-1957), drafts of letters sent by Schuller to the Egyptian Education Minister of Muhammad ʿĪsā Hilmī Pasha (d. 1953), a few letters addressed by Wensinck to Nicolaas Braat, the Dutch Chancellor in Cairo,¹⁶ and translations of cuttings of news items from Egyptian papers on the issue.¹⁷ The Wensinck affair

is nowhere recorded in the minutes of the Royal Dutch Academy for Sciences. There is only one remark mentioned during the meeting of January 9, 1933, which only announced the Egyptian plan for establishing the academy.¹⁸

Strangely enough, the case of Wensinck is not mentioned at all in the Academy's official magazine or in Ibrāhīm Madkūr's three-volume work on the history of the Academy.¹⁹ In his study, Rached Hamzaoui spoke about Wensinck's exclusion in the context of Muslim criticism of orientalism. He also noted that the case affected the manifestation of hostility of Muslims towards orientalists, their methods and the contents of their research among Muslims: 'The case of Wensinck posed, in fact, the problem of the presence of orientalists at the Academy, which is rightfully exposed here, as far as this presence could influence the working-methods of the Academy, by bringing up language problems and finding a modern solution for them.'²⁰ In his study on Snouck Hurgronje, Van Koningsveld considered this confrontation as an all-time low in the history of Egyptian-Dutch diplomatic relations. He also criticized other European nominees for their lack of solidarity in response to Wensinck's dismissal. Despite their immediate contact with the Egyptian authorities and their own governments, they were not collectively decisive in protecting their colleague's academic reputation. He also compared their stance to Snouck's lack of decisive action to secure his colleague's position, although he was in the heyday of his academic career.²¹

Arent Jan Wensinck

Wensinck was born the son of the Dutch reformed clergyman Johan Herman Wensinck on August 7, 1882. Following in his father's footsteps he decided to study theology in Utrecht in 1901. But one year later he chose to study semitic languages. In July 1904 he continued his studies in Leiden, where the Arabist M. J. de Goeje was setting the tone for Arabic studies. He finished his Masters *cum laude*. Besides his command of Arabic, he also possessed a proficient knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. Later he attended lectures in Berlin and Heidelberg, and defended his dissertation entitled *Mohammed en Joden in Medina* (Mohammed and the Jews in Medina) (1909).²²

He started his academic career as a lecturer in the West-Aramaic dialects and Syriac at the University of Utrecht, and in 1912 was nominated to succeed Gerrit Wildeboer (1855-1911) to hold the Chair of Semitic Lan-

guages in Leiden. Around the same time he was appointed as Secretary of the *EI*. In 1917, he became a member of the Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Academy of Sciences) in Amsterdam. Beside his publications on philology and history of religions, he dedicated most of his scholarly career to the study of oriental mystic figures, such as Bar Hebraeus (1919), Isaac of Nineveh (1923), and Al-Ghazālī (1930). In 1927 he succeeded Snouck Hugronje in Leiden as a Professor of Arabic, Syriac and Islam. Assisted by another twenty-four collaborators, Wensinck finished his most famous work *A Handbook of Muhammadan Traditions* (1927), and five years later *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge, 1932). In 1933 Wensinck published seven volumes of his Arabic edition of the *Concordance et Indices de la Tradition Musulmane (Al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras)*, which was fully completed thirty years after his death in 1969. He always maintained solidarity with the Dutch Reformed Church, and emphatically proclaimed his confessional membership of the Church in the 1930s.²³ In 1938 he was awarded the honorary degree of DPhil from the University of Algiers. The Dutch government conferred upon him the title of Knight in the Order of the Dutch Lion. He died in Leiden after a long period of illness in September 1939.

Creation of the Academy

The idea of founding an Arabic language academy in Egypt was not new. Known as the Al-Bakrī Academy, a group of Arab men of letters and scholars had established a private project (1892) in the house of Muhammad Tawfiq al-Bakrī (1870-1932) for the same purpose.²⁴ In June 1917, another group of prominent writers initiated a short-lived project under the name of the Egyptian Language Academy.²⁵

At the time when Ahmad Lutfī Al-Sayyid was Minister of Education and also member of the 1917 academy, the government allocated funds specifically for the purpose of founding an Arabic language academy. Other Arabic academies in the Levant welcomed the decision and resolved to send some of their members to Cairo to investigate means of promoting cooperation with the new academy. Due to tensions on the Egyptian political stage, the Arabic academy was delayed till the summer of 1932, when Lutfī al-Sayyid's successor Hilmī ʿĪsā Pasha had 'taken the project file from its drawer in the archives and begun to discuss the matter with eminent linguists and other scholars.'²⁶ On December 13, 1932, the Egyptian King Fu'ād signed his decree of establishing the Academy.



Members of the Royal Arabic Language Academy in Cairo, Egypt, a few years after the dismissal of A.J. Wensinck (1936).

The Royal Arabic Language Academy was established as subordinate to the Ministry of Education. Its primary aim was to preserve the integrity of the Arabic language, and to match it with the modern demands of sciences and arts. The academy was also expected to compile a historical dictionary of the Arabic language, organize academic studies of modern Arabic dialects and explore all possible means for the advancement of Arabic.²⁷

Orientalists in the Academy

Before the decree of nomination was made public, the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahrām* conducted a survey among its readers and writers to ‘nominate’ twenty individuals. Nominees were to be skilled writers only, possessing a broad knowledge of the history of the Arabic language and literature. They also had to be proficient in at least one modern foreign language and in at least one ancient language (such as Latin or Greek). Additionally, at least one of the languages must be connected to the Arabic culture, such as Persian, Hebrew or Syriac. *Al-Ahrām* narrowed the choice by providing a list of a hundred possible candidates.²⁸

The Minister of Education was actually in favour of the idea of nominating orientalists. In his mind, the purpose of the academy was to serve science, and science is not bound to nationality. The Minister was convinced that the participation of orientalists would benefit the academy and raise its scholarly standards: 'as long as we need people versed in the principles and origins of the Oriental Semitic languages why should we not avail ourselves of the expertise of leading orientalist scholars in these languages.'²⁹ In August 1932, therefore, he travelled to Europe to meet some orientalists. The visit was proposed to include a better check on the choice of those orientalists and the effectiveness of their potential input.³⁰

Meanwhile, Egyptian writers widely discussed the question of whether the new academy should be purely Egyptian or include other Arabs and European orientalists. Tāha Husayn was in favour of the idea of the nomination of Western scholars. A certain Muhammad Shawqī Amīn supported the idea that 'inclusiveness in such matters will remove the Academy from the realm of systematic work to that of conferences and the like, thereby stamping it with a literary, more than a practical, nature.'³¹ A certain Yāsīn Ahmad, chief magistrate of the Egyptian Criminal Court, did not positively support the idea of nominating foreign orientalists. 'Although it might appear desirable on the surface,' he argued, 'the notion carried an implicit threat to the Arabic language. One of the most important tasks of the academy would be to compile a comprehensive linguistic lexicon. Naturally, we would like that the dictionary is an accurate mirror of Arabic vocabulary as it is spoken by the people, without discrimination between the educated and non-educated.'³² The pro-government paper *Al-Muqattam* supported the participation of orientalists either as active members or as observers. Their presence, it wrote, 'will strengthen the resolve of the Eastern members and inspire them to double their activities while allowing them to benefit from Western philological methodology.'³³

In October 1933 the King issued a decree nominating twenty members in the Academy's board. These members were chosen regardless of their national affiliation, from among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars, who were highly respected for their expertise in Arabic. The board included five European orientalists: namely, the British Sir H.A.R. Gibb (1895-1971), the French Louis Massignon, the German August Fischer, the Italian Carlo A. Nallino (1872-1938) and the Dutch Arent Jan Wensinck. Other non-Muslim members were Hāyim Nahūm (1863-1960), the Chief Rabbi in Cairo, and the Christian Father Marie Anistās al-Karmalī (1866-1947), Fāris Nimr (1855-1952) and ʿĪsā Iskandar al-Maʿlūf (1869-1956).

The initial members were appointed by royal decree; any vacated seats would be filled on the basis of a two-thirds majority vote of the remaining members. The director of the Academy was to be selected from among three working members of the board, and elected by a majority vote of all members in attendance. He would occupy the position for a term of three years, which would be renewed through the same procedures. The board would meet annually for at least one month, in winter or in spring time. The budget of the Academy was subsumed under the budget of the Ministry of Education. In addition to printing all materials requested by the academy free of charge, the Ministry was responsible for the implementation of all decisions taken by the Academy with regard to vocabulary and structures by disseminating them as broadly as possible, especially by ensuring the use of such vocabulary and structures in government agencies, in educational curricula and in set textbooks.³⁴

Many people were, however, disappointed by the nomination of foreign orientalists. Letters to the editor of *Al-Ahrām* seriously questioned the government's selection process in its entirety. Some other Arab intellectuals, on the other hand, doubted the scientific level of the traditional members in the Academy as compared to their orientalist colleagues. The Syrio-Egyptian literary figure Bishr Fāris (1907-1963), for example, warned his newly nominated master Massignon that except for two or three members the majority of nominees had been chosen arbitrarily. They did not produce any works of rigorous scientific quality, except a few with traditional Islamic themes.³⁵

Wensinck's Short-lived Nomination

During the process of nomination, Egyptian officials only approached the British High Commissioner and the consuls of Italy, Germany and France in Cairo to recommend names for the new posts, but not the Dutch diplomats. Having been informed by Gaston Wiet (d. 1971), the French orientalist and director of the Museum of Arab Arts in Cairo, about the Egyptian plan,³⁶ Schuller immediately visited Hilmī Pasha to draw his attention to Leiden's prominence in oriental studies, and to discuss the possibility of nominating a Dutch orientalist as well. The reason why the Egyptian authorities did not think of the Netherlands was, according to Schuller, that there had not been a diplomatic representative in Egypt during the previous eight months. The Egyptian minister, as a result of this intervention, asked him to hand over a statement of potential Dutch candidates and to bring it to his office personally.³⁷

The Royal Academy of Sciences in Amsterdam suggested four names for this post in the following order: Snouck Hurgronje, A.J. Wensinck, Th.W. Juynboll (1866-1948), and J.H. Kramers (1891-1951).³⁸ In June 1933, ‘Abd al-Fattāh Yahyā Pasha (1876-1951), the Egyptian Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, told Schuller that Wensinck had been selected as a member. According to Schuller, Snouck’s old age and numerous occupations were the reason why it was difficult for him to join the Academy.³⁹ He stressed to his executives in The Hague the significance of the position. In case Wensinck should reject the offer, the post would automatically go to an Egyptian scholar. By this decision Egypt would also recognize the ‘educational value’ of Leiden in oriental languages.⁴⁰ Wensinck accepted the offer, because it would also give him a good opportunity to make use of the stay in Egypt for his future studies. He was content with the diverse character of the Academy and its non-Muslim members, especially his orientalist friends Gibb, Massignon and Nallino (he did not mention Fischer), whose scholarship he highly esteemed.⁴¹ In the same month, Schuller notified Hilmī Pasha about Wensinck’s acceptance.⁴²

As soon as the royal decree became known in the press, the Egyptian physician and health inspector Husayn al-Harrāwī launched a most virulent attack against orientalists, especially Wensinck. His first article appeared on the front-page of *Al-Ahrām*: ‘Orientalists and Islam: Arabic Language Academy Member Wensinck Ridicules Islam,’ in which he severely attacked the article on Ibrāhīm in the *EI*, and accused the Dutch scholar of ‘assuming a premise and then searching the Quran for those verses that support this premise, discarding any that contradict it so as to produce a conclusion that plants the seeds of doubt in the mind of the reader. This is the method that orientalists use in their studies on Islam, on the life of the Prophet or on any matter to which they wish to bring the Quran to bear as evidence. It is an old ruse, the purpose of which is to arm evangelists and colonialists with pseudo-logical arguments to shake the beliefs of the Muslim people and cause them to abandon their religion.’⁴³ Wensinck was also depicted as ‘a babbler who attacks our religion and who has been appointed as a member at our Language Academy in our country whose religion of state is Islam. And now after this, we ask what is the opinion of the Minister of Education Hilmī Pasha.’⁴⁴ The opposition *wafdist* paper *al-Jihād* took Harrāwī’s accusations one step further. Subsequent short articles, signed under the name *Muslim*, similarly portrayed Wensinck as a ‘tyrant’ and ‘enemy of Islam’, and blamed the Egyptian government and Al-Azhar for their negligence and silence in protecting Islam.⁴⁵

Greatly alarmed by these accusations, Dutch diplomats immediately notified their authorities in The Hague about the press accusations. They sent them cuttings from different Arabic, French and English papers, which eagerly followed the issue or attacked Wensinck. At the same time, the Consulate also contacted Wensinck personally to ask him for his comments. It was planning, however, to seek support from the Shaykh Al-Azhar.⁴⁶ In his reply, Wensinck telegraphed back: 'My sympathy for Islam is well-known.'⁴⁷ In a more detailed letter, he admitted that his article was merely a reproduction of Snouck's theory, which was widely known in Europe. He defended his works, stating that these were purely scientific and have nothing to do with attacking Islam. As examples for his sympathy for Islam, he mentioned two of his famous works: *The Muslim Creed* and the *Concordance of Hadith*. 'On the other hand,' Wensinck wrote, 'it is understandable that the freedom of research as self-evident in Europe appears to writers of such articles like the ones which have been sent to me, as a lack of piety, when it is applied to the history of Islam as well. I hope that the Egyptian government would see my views, which are held by many other orientalists, in the way indicated. I shall highly appreciate my nomination as a member of the Academy and participate to the best of my abilities in its activities, but our freedom of research should obviously be presumed to remain.'⁴⁸

The reason behind the anti-Wensinck campaign was not completely clear to the Dutch officials in Cairo. In the very beginning, they had suspected that the *Al-Jihād* articles had been fuelled by one of the Indonesian students at Al-Azhar. Schuller had referred the case to the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies, the Advisor of Native Affairs in Batavia and the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah.⁴⁹ Later, he demonstrated his conviction that the attack was probably stirred up by a group of Arab scholars who were disappointed that the decree did not leave room for other famous poets and writers. He suspected that the founder of *Al-Ahrām* was one of the disappointed candidates, and that he initiated the campaign for that reason.⁵⁰ However, the most plausible explanation, according to him, was the general political atmosphere in Egypt. Due to his deteriorating health and the bad functioning of his cabinet, the Egyptian Prime Minister was vulnerable to severe criticism. It was a favourable moment for the oppositional Wafd Party to press hard and play on religious sentiment for achieving political advantage by blaming the government for its failure to ward off foreign assaults on Islam. Wensinck's remark on Abraham was therefore the grist for its mill, just as its stance towards the question of Christian missionary work in Egypt.⁵¹ Wensinck attributed the attacks to

the same factors: hostility towards missions and foreigners and the 'agitation' by various people.⁵²

Having received Wensinck's reaction, Schuller immediately discussed the matter with Hilmī Pasha in his office. He clarified that the campaign was misleading the public opinion in Egypt regarding Wensinck's real feelings of sympathy towards Islam.⁵³ In an interview published in *Al-Ahrām* (November 3, 1933), he defended Wensinck in a similar way, explaining that his works were merely historical. The issue was, according to him, an interior one, and had no impact in any way on Dutch-Egyptian relations. However, he compared the Minister's decision of dismissing Wensinck with the religious protest against some phrases in Bernard Shaw's play *Saint Joan of Arc* (1925). Schuller reported that the Grand Shaykh of Al-Azhar had requested the editors of the *EI* to submit to him all publications relating to Islam before being printed.⁵⁴

In order to clear his name from any hostility against Islam, Wensinck sent the Consulate parts from his work *The Muslim Creed* on the Islamic views on predestination to be shown to the Egyptian Minister of Education.⁵⁵ Meanwhile the Minister appointed Ahmad al-ʿAwāmīrī (1876-1954),⁵⁶ chief inspector of the Arabic language at the Ministry and also a member at the Academy, to study Wensinck's works and submit a report about it. The Egyptian newspapers reported confusing statements on ʿAwāmīrī's conclusions. *Al-Ahrām* maintained that he did not find anything hurtful to Islam in Wensinck's views. His work *The Muslim Creed* contained information related to the opinions of Muslim scholars and sects. The author spoke therein about the concept of monotheism in Islam without provocation, and did not go beyond the methods of scientific research.⁵⁷ *Al-Jihād* rejected *Al-Ahrām's* report by stating that its correspondent confirmed that ʿAwāmīrī's report contained strong criticism against Wensinck's philosophical and religious points of view.⁵⁸ For his part, Schuller admitted the difficulty facing his Consulate in changing the attitude of the Egyptian government towards the press accusations. He did not have much hope, as the apparent success of *Al-Jihād's* continuing campaign was ample evidence for why Hilmī Pasha hesitated to stand up for Wensinck by making a clear-cut announcement in the press.⁵⁹

A few days later, *Al-Ahrām* reported that high officials in the Ministry had reached a final decision, concluding that Wensinck's interpretations neither matched with the Islamic faith, nor corroborated with the views of mainstream Muslim theologians. What Wensinck undertook, the report went on, is considered a disparagement of Islam, but not an attack. It was rather similar to the attempt of what a Muslim would do who did not be-

lieve in the Christian Trinity. They also considered that the Minister had come to his decision remaining within the proper limits of his job. The report noted that the Ministry had taken the same position, in a previous incident concerning some lecturers at the University, who were teaching in accordance with similar principles adopted by Wensinck.⁶⁰

Schuller proposed to his Ministry in The Hague to publish a communiqué on Wensinck's response. De Graef, Wensinck and the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences agreed that it should be an edited version of Wensinck's earlier letter of reaction. It should also add that Wensinck's views were not only generally accepted in the West, but held by some Arab scholars as well. As far as critical attitudes towards religions were concerned, one should not take into consideration the different convictions of their followers.⁶¹ Schuller forwarded the French translation of the proposed communiqué to Hilmī ʿĪsā Pasha to be made public by the Egyptian government.⁶²

Apparently, the Ministry did not publish such a communiqué. In the meantime, however, *Al-Ahrām* further reported that the Ministry reached its definitive conclusion by taking another course, viz. Wensinck's statements on Islam were to be considered an 'attack' on Islam, although he sometimes presented his own remarks, and some other times based his arguments on Muslim historical sources. With regard to his membership at the Academy, two alternatives were put forward by the Ministry: 1) Wensinck would renounce his views and give ample written apologies for these statements, which should satisfy all religious bodies and end the dispute, 2) or Wensinck should be asked to resign, as his presence among other members would not be welcomed anymore, especially among his Muslim colleagues finding themselves together with a person who offended their sense of dignity: this would also eliminate the spirit of esteem and harmony among the colleagues.⁶³

In his meeting with Schuller, Hilmī ʿĪsā Pasha explained that the ministerial report was not wholly negative. But after its release, the press campaign continued. The Egyptian government, therefore, was compelled to bring the case forward to Al-Azhar for consideration. The scholars responded that Wensinck's views on Abraham were contrary to historical facts, and consequently offended most Muslim believers. Wensinck's coming to Egypt was thus unadvisable, as his ideas now had become widely known to the majority of Muslims in Egypt and elsewhere.⁶⁴

The other four orientalist decided to take action against Wensinck's dismissal. Pressured by their diplomats in Cairo, they held back their strong initial objections on behalf of their colleague. They actively partici-

pated in the Academy, as a result of the official invitation sent to them by the end of November.⁶⁵ The idea of protest was at first suggested by Gibb, who was concerned that Wensinck's 'drop' might encourage the 'opposition' to take further efforts against the rest of the orientalist by causing more hostility against the Minister of Education.⁶⁶ He was convinced in the beginning that the only 'self-respecting' action would be to collectively resign.⁶⁷ Gibb and Massignon were not certain about the readiness of Fischer to take part in their collective protest. They feared that Fischer, who adhered to the Nationalist Socialist Party in 1920s, 'might perhaps be inclined to put the solidarity of European [...] scholarship after the rights of any nation to enforce in public education the teaching of the newly discovered national and racial dogmas'.⁶⁸ However, they strove to gain Nallino's support in case Fischer would remain silent. Approached by Nallino, Fischer finally accepted to take part in their collective protest.⁶⁹

Before their arrival to Egypt, they sent a letter to Hilmī 'Īsā Pasha in which they explained their solidarity with Wensinck. They assumed that the minister would never risk the abstinence of all orientalist, whose presence was particularly desired by the King, for the sake of gratifying a part of the opposition.⁷⁰ But later it appeared to them that it was certainly better not to resign immediately and individually, but merely to withhold their cooperation till they could do so collectively.⁷¹ Fischer, moreover, held the view that the time to have further negotiations with the Egyptian Minister was limited. Likewise, they would not have a proper view of the whole situation from a distance. He also believed that Hilmī Pasha was not going to make any concessions, and 'let [his government] be tyrannized by a group of Egyptian fanatics'.⁷² He made it clear that: 'at the request of my government I have to [...] observe a certain restraint. However, this cannot and will not force me to go to Cairo when I state that for me it is impossible to cooperate with the Academy under the given circumstances'.⁷³ The four orientalist travelled to Egypt, which greatly disappointed Wensinck and Sonuck Hurgonje (discussed below).⁷⁴

Schuller raised the question of the other foreign academics to Hilmī Pasha, and whether his decision would open the door for further protest against them in the future. The Minister did not give any clear answer, but insisted that the Egyptian resolution with regard to this case was contingent on the circumstances. Due to the popularization of Wensinck's ideas and the anxiety of public opinion, the Minister asked Schuller to convey his verbal message to his Dutch counterparts that they should understand the political difficulty the Egyptian officials were facing. Schuller stated that the Minister did not speak a word about the second alternative earlier

suggested in *Al-Ahrām*, namely that Wensinck should submit a written denial of his views. For unknown reasons, he also did not want to officially write to his Dutch counterparts. It also surprised Schuller that the Egyptian Prime Minister Yahyā Pasha did not concern himself with the matter. This would clearly affirm the rumours that there were no sincere religious convictions behind the press attack, but the campaign was backed by a group of minor journalists in opposition parties, personal enemies of the King and some members in the cabinet, whose intentions were to cause the government trouble.⁷⁵

The Chief Chamberlain of the King let Schuller know that since Wensinck's name was wrapped up in a controversy in which the scholars of Al-Azhar were involved, it became impossible for both the Egyptian Prime Minister and the Minister of Education to uphold his nomination. Egyptian authorities tried to convince Schuller that its decision was not directed against Dutch scholarship. They also showed their serious desire of nominating another Dutch scholar in Wensinck's place.⁷⁶

In a telephone conversation (January 7, 1933), Hilmī Pasha informed Schuller that the Egyptian diplomatic agent in The Hague had not reached an agreement yet about finding a Dutch substitute to Wensinck. But probably due to his quick departure back to Cairo, he did not state his government's point of view of their potential request with the Dutch authorities. De Graef and his colleague the Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences finally agreed not to substitute Wensinck, maintaining that naming any other Dutch scholar would surely be detrimental to the dignity of Dutch scholarship. The Egyptian Minister expressed his regret that his good intentions towards Dutch scholarship had been shipwrecked as a result of this incidental dismay against Wensinck in Arab scholarly circles, which were heavily influenced by public opinion.⁷⁷ As the Dutch authorities did not nominate any substitute, the Minister decided to replace him with another Egyptian or foreign nominee. Schuller had little faith in the 'platonically' statement made by Wensinck's Western colleagues, that they would forsake the opening session till they received a satisfying solution. If they had shown real solidarity, they should have remained absent altogether. In that case, they would probably have achieved real fruitful results. Schuller anticipated that if they went to Egypt, their protest would bring about no effect; and another European member would immediately be chosen to replace Wensinck.⁷⁸

Rumours were circulated that the post was to be given to a French scholar.⁷⁹ But on January 23, 1933, *Al-Ahrām* announced the Minister's decision of replacing Wensinck with the German orientalist Enno Littmann

(1875-1958).⁸⁰ Schuller promptly reported that it was Hilmī Pasha who had directly invited Littmann to act as one of the members. Fischer was not involved in the negotiations, which only took place between the German Consul and Egyptian officials. Littmann, who hesitated at first, accepted the post upon his consul's urgent request.⁸¹ Wensinck shared Schuller's pessimism that the protest of the four European members would then have any effect. He was also disappointed that Littmann had put his principles as a scholar aside by accepting the nomination. Littmann earlier informed Wensinck that he had been asked to come to Cairo without knowing anything about the nomination. There he was verbally invited to substitute the late Gottlieb Bergsträsser (1886-1933), who was originally offered the place of Wensinck.⁸² In his autobiography, on the other hand, Littmann reported that 'King Fu'ād, who as a prince established the Egyptian University, founded the Arabic Language Academy in 1934 and wished me to be one of its five European members.'⁸³

According to Schuller, Hilmī Pasha had made his quick decision to replace Wensinck, because he wanted to put an end to all the scruples felt by other foreign members about their participation. He had confronted the German scholar with a *'fait accompli'*.⁸⁴ Hilmī Pasha often argued that his government reserved for itself the freedom to break off any relations achieved through diplomatic representatives. The same holds true for withdrawing the appointment of any foreign scholar for the benefit of Egyptian scientific institutions, when internal circumstances become compelling.⁸⁵

Until 1914 the Germans managed to stake out the Egyptian National Library as their cultural preserve. Five successive German orientalist (L. Stern, W. Spitta, K. Volkers, B. Moritz, and A. Schaade) had directed the library since its foundation in 1870. Littmann was the only German orientalist at the Egyptian University, in the period before the war (1910-1912). He returned to Egypt in 1929 as a visiting professor in comparative Semitic languages and literatures. A. Schaade, the expelled director of the National Library, returned to Egypt to replace the departing M. Guidi at the University in 1930.⁸⁶

Schuller suspected that the German diplomats had played a role in the intrigues and the press campaign, which led to the nomination of a second German orientalist (in all probability involving bribery). The Arab press, he went on, had been thoroughly influenced by the German Consul in the last months in order to do anything that could promote his country's prestige and position as a great power in Egypt. In a wider context, his activities gave rise to an anti-campaign led by some parts of the French-

Egyptian press, which reproached him for his direct negotiations with both the Ministers of Labour and Communication in order to compensate for the Jewish boycott of German goods by acquiring important orders for German industry. Schuller therefore concluded that the reality did not match with the Minister's oft-repeated argument that Wensinck was dismissed for religious reasons, as a result of the agitation of the public against his articles.⁸⁷

In order to show his executives the nature and seriousness of the campaign, Schuller conveyed to them what he had confidentially heard from a Catholic clergyman in Cairo, namely that Father Karmalī was threatened with murder if he accepted a nomination at the Academy. He again affirmed his suspicion that Al-Azhar was behind the campaign. As an orthodox institution, he continued, it does not know how to appreciate any scholarly work, and it considered that everything related to Arabic should belong to its *shaykhs*. As a result Al-Azhar became the foremost adversary to any outside interference. He also believed that the Egyptian King, as the founder of the Academy, had not intervened to solve the problem, because he was worried about losing his power over Al-Azhar and the whole Arabic press in the country. Any positive attitude towards Wensinck would consequently endanger his position. His Majesty would rather 'sacrifice' Wensinck in order to preserve his good relationship with Al-Azhar.⁸⁸

Schuller later reported that, with the exception of the two German members, the other orientologists had applied for an accurate and written statement by Hilmī Pasha, in which it was guaranteed that they would never face the same fate in the future as that of their Dutch colleague. The Minister verbally assured them that they would not be called to account either for their already published or yet-to-be published works in the future.⁸⁹

Even after the opening ceremony of the Academy, the Dutch authorities were still seeking a solution to the problem. De Graef considered the Egyptian attitude biased. Having failed to solve the problem with the Egyptian Minister of Education, Schuller was then asked to take the issue to a higher level and direct his objections to Abd al-Fattāh Yahyā, informing him personally that the Dutch government was unpleasantly struck by the course of action taken by Hilmī Pasha, and his unfair treatment of Wensinck compared to the other western members.⁹⁰ He was also asked to confirm that the Netherlands strongly stands behind its professor's scholarly views and his undisputed academic reputation in oriental studies, and to state clearly that they were much grieved by the development of the whole affair. Dutch authorities still expected that the Egyptian government would find a way of inviting Wensinck for the further activities

of the Academy.⁹¹ Schuller immediately visited the Council of Ministers and passed the message to Yahyā Pasha, who only apologized in a diplomatic way. However, it had become impossible for Wensinck to take part in the Academy's activities: 'It astonishes me that the Dutch government persists in wanting to impose on the Egyptian government an orientalist, who, with his writing, opposed the official religion of Egypt'⁹² Schuller believed at this stage that the issue had reached a stalemate. He had the impression that the Egyptian authorities were determined in their attitude. They were not ready to re-nominate Wensinck, nor to appoint another Dutch scholar as a 'correspondent' member in his place.⁹³ In November 1934, another Egyptian cabinet had been established. Schuller made a renewed attempt by writing to the newly-appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs Ibrāhīm Kamāl Bey, asking him to approach his colleague Najib al-Hilālī Bey, the Minister of Education to reconsider Wensinck's membership of the Academy. At the time the latter was planning to reorganize the structure of the Academy. But this also ended in a failure.⁹⁴

As has been hinted at earlier, Snouck Hurgronje and Wensinck considered the attitude of other orientalists as 'unjustifiable abandonment of solidarity'. They felt entirely excluded, because they were not kept updated on the later developments of the protest. Due to their promise to the Egyptian Minister to strictly keep their negotiations secret, and the diplomatic pressure imposed upon them, the four orientalists were not able to inform Wensinck about the developments in writing. They worried that any direct written correspondence with their Dutch colleagues would probably be used against them. In order to ease the tension, Massignon suggested that one of them should travel to Leiden on their behalf to inform Snouck and Wensinck of their earlier steps, and to show the relevant documents concerning their position.⁹⁵ Fischer was the only one who disagreed with Massignon's proposal, since verbal communication, in his view, could be also considered as breach to their promise: 'The promise that we made in Cairo has its limitation with respect to our duty towards Wensinck, who has the right to be informed by us, at least I have made this promise with this limitation. [...] I am [...] of the opinion, that a letter would be equally good, and maybe even better. [...] In case I hear nothing from him, I will write to Wensinck in about eight days that I cannot carry out my intention to inform him about our progress in Cairo.'⁹⁶ Massignon again suggested that Gibb should be delegated on their behalf to discuss the matter with Wensinck and Snouck personally, and to show them the dossier of all relevant documents, such as their correspondences with the Egyptian Minister and with their own legations in Cairo. Gibb should af-

terwards write a summary of their meeting, and send it back to Wensinck to sign.⁹⁷ Fischer accepted the solution that the protocol should be signed by all of them, and Wensinck should be informed that they had made use of every opportune moment to defend the significance of his works before the oriental members at the Academy. Wensinck was to understand that they did not leave him in the lurch, especially because he had to wait for such a long period without any authentic explanation for their attitude. He should be informed about the intervention of their governments in the case of the unexpected arrival of Littmann, and that they were also keen on protecting their position against any attack or suspicion.⁹⁸

At first, Wensinck and Snouck refused their request for a meeting. However, they accepted Gibb's arrival after he had written to them again, emphasizing the necessity of the visit.⁹⁹ Before his arrival at Leiden, Gibb met with Massignon at Le Bourget to ensure that the dossier of documents bearing on the situation was complete and to fill up any lacunae. On the morning of September 18, he arrived in Leiden and had a short informal conversation with Wensinck in order to ascertain his attitude more precisely, before their meeting with Snouck. During their official meeting, he explained to them the 'dilemma' that was forced upon them, when they received the unexpected telegraphic invitations.¹⁰⁰ The ineffective results of their personal interventions in Egypt convinced them of the necessity of maintaining a united front, in the hope of reaching a satisfactory solution upon their arrival at Cairo in this way. The sudden appearance of Littmann and the pressure exercised through diplomatic channels to make them withdraw their letter with objections, had made things more complicated and closed the door to any further progress.¹⁰¹ Gibb also referred to the ministerial situation in Egypt and the close personal interest taken by the King in the affairs of the Academy. He assured them that all these points were presented to Snouck and Wensinck as a plain narrative of fact, not casting them too much into the form of an apologia.¹⁰²

For the most part, Snouck and Wensinck remained silent and made little comment. Only with regard to the decision to maintain a united front did Snouck contend that there was no necessity to do so. Snouck was mostly hurt by the fact that no communication reached him about the reasons for the change of their attitudes and of later developments. Snouck confirmed to Gibb that 'by not drawing a bold line *they* had allowed the public to believe that European science had passed under the yoke of the *'Ulamā'* [...] It is too late.'¹⁰³ Gibb's personal response was that they all had 'a positive duty, namely to respond to the generous initiative of the King of Egypt in inviting orientologists to collaborate in the work of

the Academy.¹⁰⁴ This argument produced no favourable response. Gibb had the impression that Wensinck was guided in his actions by the views of Snouck Hurgronje. Both of them thanked Gibb for his visit, but neither of them expressed any appreciation for the efforts made to refute the unjustifiable charges brought against Wensinck. Gibb reported that just before his departure from Leiden, Wensinck made the following statement: 'I am not entirely convinced, and still think it would have been better to draw a bold line with the Egyptian Minister. But I now understand the position much better, and realize the dilemma in which you were placed. I can see that you believed in the advantage of preserving solidarity, and went to Cairo with the intention of seeking a solution there, but were prevented from carrying out your purpose.'¹⁰⁵

Having received a copy of Gibb's account of their meeting, Wensinck added two corrections. He would have appreciated any initiative of the Academy to re-nominate him, but this would not have 'altered his decision to decline a nomination, on account of *his* shrinking back from any further connection with the Egyptian government.'¹⁰⁶ Also, for Gibb to think that Snouck completely influenced his actions, would give quite a false impression stated Wensinck. As for the last statements, Wensinck corrected Gibb saying that although he understood their position better, he was still of the opinion that 'it would have been better not to go to Egypt before having received a satisfactory answer.'¹⁰⁷ Gibb was embarrassed by the whole situation. He reported to Massignon (probably not to the rest): 'You were quite right. I am afraid Snouck is implacable. He was most courteous, but rigid – Wensinck much more friendly. I cannot feel that I have done much good – and only hope that I have not done harm.'¹⁰⁸

Muslim Views on Wensinck and the EI in Egypt

In the wake of Wensinck's dismissal, the debate on the nature of orientalism and the *EI* intensified in Egypt. Sometimes, his case was used to discredit orientalism as a whole. Intellectuals from various groups started to publish their critical views either on the orientalist approaches or on technical problems in the Arabic translation of the *EI*. Most of them were not satisfied with what they considered a skewed portrayal of many Islamic issues made by many of its contributors, especially the Belgian-born Jesuit H. Lammens (1862-1937). It should, however, be added that from the beginning of its publication every article in the *EI* was to be signed by the author, and the editors were not to bear any responsibility.

M.Th. Houtsma (1851-1943),¹⁰⁹ its editor-in-chief, clearly expressed his concern that with exceptions, his collaborators were all Christians, and belonged to quite different peoples. He considered it his task to maintain the scientific and neutral character of the work on a high and impartial level, and to be very careful not to entrust articles to incompetent hands. On the other hand, any scholar whose scientific qualities were beyond suspicion could not be refused the right to publish in all liberty the results of his research, even if occasionally they were provocative. On that ground, the editorial staff members had accepted the articles by Lammens, although they personally did not agree with their spirit and tendency.¹¹⁰

Before the controversy, Wensinck's reputation among Muslim scholars in Egypt had been much connected to his *Handbook* more than to his contributions to the *EI*. The prominent Muslim jurist Ahmad Muhammad Shākir (1892-1958)¹¹¹ was perhaps the first Muslim scholar to pay attention to Wensinck's work. In October 1928 he received the *Handbook*, which he considered to be a treasure that should be known to Arab and Muslim readers. Two years later Shākir met Wensinck for the first time in the Salafiyya Library in Cairo, and requested his permission to embark upon translating the work into Arabic. In the same year, Shākir's enthusiasm about the work stimulated his teacher and the well-known Muslim scholar Muhammad Rashīd Ridā (1865-1935) to personally direct the same request at Wensinck, who replied in the affirmative: 'Yes, I wish that the book would be of much use, especially among the people of Egypt and the Hijāz whom I respect and love much.'¹¹²

It is worthy to note that Wensinck probably saw Ridā for the first time, when the latter was giving a lecture on February 9, 1930 at Jam'iyat ar-Rābita ash-Sharqiyya (the Association of Oriental Union) in Cairo. In his travel diary, Wensinck gives a caricatural description of Ridā: 'The Sayyid [Ridā] is a corpulent small man without legs,¹¹³ big turban, a fat nose, and a full beard, superb when he speaks. The subject of the lecture was: 'old and new'. The majority of the audience was enthusiastic. Before he started, a young man showing great approval had stood up and said: 'Yahyā [long live] al-Sayyid Rashīd Ridā.' This lecture [went on] with some interruptions, and sometimes the Sayyid would interrupt himself.'¹¹⁴

As Shākir could not finish the whole task of translation, Ridā recommended Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī (1882-1968) to continue with the translation work. The controversy surrounding Wensinck's writings on Islam did not influence the continuation of the translation work. Shākir however invited readers from all over the Muslim world to use the work.

ليدن هولندا في ١٥ ربيع الثاني الموافق ١٩ سبتمبر ١٩٣٠

جناب الاستاذ العلامة السيد محمد رشيد رضا
المحترم مني مجلة المنار الشهيرة

بعد السؤال عن محنتكم والتحيات الحسنى
فقد هلني جوابكم الذي شرفتمني فيه بالاستئذان
لنقل فهرست الاحاديث الشريفة الى اللغة الصربية
اما انا فلا مانع من جهتي من نقل

الفهرست الى اللغة الصربية نعم اني
ارجو ان يكثر نفع وفائدة الكتاب حضورها
لاهل مصر والحجاز الذين احترمهم واحبهم
وتفضلوا بقبول فائق احتراماتي

ا.ج. وينسنك

A letter to Rashid Rida written by Arent Jan Wensinck (September 1, 1930). The letter is preserved at the Rashid Rida family archive in Cairo.

ʿAbd al-Bāqī was able to publish the Arabic edition of the *Handbook* under the title *Miftāh Kunūz as-Sunna* (Key to the Treasures of Sunna).¹¹⁵ The work was published a few months after Wensinck’s dismissal from the Academy. In his introduction (written July 23, 1934), Shākīr still expressed his appreciation for the work, and did not refer to the stormy debate about Wensinck.

It is interesting to know that Ridā was one of the founders of the Egyptian Language Academy in 1917, and his name appeared again on the list of selected candidates for the Royal Academy in the *Al-Ahrām* survey mentioned above. Although the journal *Al-Manār* was not directly involved in the controversy, nor did it express any explicit views about his dismissal, Ridā’s general attitude towards Wensinck and his *Handbook* was ambivalent. In the very beginning, he had highly praised the author’s meticulous efforts in compiling the *hadīth*. Wensinck’s greatest critic, Al-Harrāwī, probably belonged to Ridā’s circle. But he did not contribute to the *Al-Manār* journal with any anti-orientalist polemics during Ridā’s lifetime. His work was, however, published as a series of articles in Ridā’s journal and later in one volume by Al-Manār Press, a few months after the latter’s death.

In August 1934 (seven months after Wensinck’s dismissal), Ridā wrote the preface of the *Handbook* in which he positively praised the work. He maintained that due to his many commitments, he had not been able to fully participate in the editing of the work. He stressed the usefulness of the *Handbook* for Muslim scholars in tracing all kinds of traditions; and this work would have spared him ‘three-quarters’ of his preceding work and effort in the study of *hadīth*.¹¹⁶ He considered that ʿAbd al-Bāqī’s corrections and additions would make the Arabic edition more useful than the original English version. Ridā lamented the fact that the mastery of the science of *hadīth* had been waning in Egypt and Syria since the tenth century. In his view, without the superb efforts of his contemporary Muslim scholars in India, the science would have withered away in the East. As an orientalist, Wensinck had finished his work for the purpose of serving his career and for the sake of other orientalists, Ridā went on, but Muslims needed it more in having more knowledge about the sayings and traditions of their Prophet. He cited one *hadīth* stating that: ‘Verily, God will support Islam through men, who do not belong to its adherents.’¹¹⁷

One year later, however, in the introduction to his last work on the Revelation to Muhammad,¹¹⁸ Ridā all of a sudden renounced his appreciation of Wensinck’s efforts. According to him, most orientalists did not belong to the class of independent and fair-minded European scholars, because they did not study Arabic or the books of Islam in order to know

the truth about it. They were only seeking out its weak points by describing Muslims in a disfigured way so that their people would be driven away from Islam. The *EI* and Wensinck's *Handbook* were two key examples that had already disappointed his high expectations about their scholarship. Ridā recanted his earlier lofty impression and now rendered it as a futile piece of work. He believed that the translation of his work on the Islamic conceptions about the revelation would have the effect of influencing fair-minded Europeans and convert them to Islam. He sent copies of the book to all the orientalists he knew. Having received the work, it sufficed Wensinck to thank Ridā without giving any review of the book.¹¹⁹

Ridā had a similar attitude towards the *EI*. As soon as the Arabic translation appeared, he rushed to admit that Western scholars did Muslims a great favour by authoring this work. However, he pointed out that Muslims also had a record of early achievements in organizing such encyclopaedias, but had become stagnant in preserving their own heritage. He recommended Muslim readers everywhere to purchase the Arabic translation, as reading the *EI* in Arabic, the 'public language of Islam,' would be more useful than the English, French or German. He summed up some reasons: 1) man's prime need is to know oneself; it is very useful that Muslims better know themselves through the eyes of the fair-minded, biased or opponent among the orientalists. 2) The materials on which the authors depend are abundant in Europe, and orientalists follow scholarly lines of investigation. European public opinion depended on their analyses by which they make judgments on the Orientals. 3) The translation should be supplemented with corrections and analysis made by Muslim scholars in order to guarantee the 'adequacy' of the given data according to the mainstream of Islamic thought.¹²⁰

Ridā's main concern was that western historical and literary critical views on Islam should be criticized, in accordance with the mainstream of Islamic thought. Muslim scholars should thus take part in the project. A few years earlier (1926) he had welcomed an invitation provided by *Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Islamkunde*, presided by Georg Kampffmeyer (1864-1936), inviting him and other Muslim scholars to cooperate with its editorial members. He had high expectations that their invitation to work together with Muslim scholars would result in great success.¹²¹ Ridā's suspicion of the *EI* concentrated only on two of his opponents, whom the committee had chosen in the advisory board: namely the anti-*Salafī* Azharī scholar Shaykh Yūsuf al-Dijwī (1870-1946)¹²² and the fervent Muslim propagandist and Egyptian nationalist Muhammad Farīd Wajdī (circa 1878-1954).¹²³ Dijwī's views as a traditionalist scholar were, according to

him, not to satisfy the minds of 'educated' Muslims, let alone orientalists. As for Wajdi's views, they do not directly 'refute the allegations.' Ridā requested the committee to appoint other scholars of higher scholarly position, such as Shaykh Al-Azhar Mustafā al-Marāghī (1881-1945) and the Mufti of Egypt ʿAbd al-Majīd Salīm (1882-1954).¹²⁴ Ridā, however, did not further develop any historical response to Wensinck's article on Abraham, nor did he critically study the views of Dijwī and Wajdī.¹²⁵

Very soon Ridā showed a completely different attitude by publishing a more severe article in which he talked about the 'corruption' of the *EI*. 'A deceiving name,' he wrote, '[...] for an encyclopaedia pieced together by a group of Western scholars for the sake of serving their religion and colonial states in the Muslim world. [It was intended] to destroy Islam and its forts, after all the failure of missionary attempts to attack the Quran and its prophet or spread false translations of the Quran.'¹²⁶ He harshly attacked the contributors of the *EI* of intentionally presenting Islam and its men and history in a 'twisted' way. In general he believed that 'Westerners are highly qualified in science, arts and industry, but their qualification in fabricating things is more effective.'¹²⁷ Ridā plainly revoked his earlier recommendation of the Arabic version, as the translators did not comply with his former advice of supplementing the criticisms of Muslim scholars to what he saw as 'distorting' information on Islam. He therefore believed that their 'useful' work had now changed to become 'harmful'. He requested its subscribers to appeal to the the editorial committee that the translators should add 'corrections' in the margins, otherwise they should end their subscription, by which they would be financially supporting those who attack Islam. For him, the publication of the Arabic version of the *EI* was even more dangerous than missionary books and journals. Missionary writings would hardly betray any Muslim, but the danger of *EI* was unavoidable, especially among the educated class.¹²⁸

In Ridā's journal, the Druze Prince Shakīb Arslān (1869-1946) acknowledged orientalist works to be one of the major sources of information on Islam and Muslims for Europe. Presumably Arslān's views in this regard had an impact on Ridā's hesitation. The orientalist, according to Arslān, is the *tarjumān* (translator), whose honesty or dishonesty would affect the public opinion. In case of dishonesty, his works could agitate European hatred against Islam. Arslān divided orientalists into three categories: 1) those who only searched for and enlarged the failings and weaknesses of Muslims in the eyes of Europeans. Their main intention was to serve Christianity by 'defaming' Islam and representing it as evil. Examples of this category were Lammens, Martin Hartmann (1851-1918), D. S. Mar-

goliouth (1858-1940) and Wensinck. 2) The second, whom he called ‘sensible enemies’, were those whose main concern was to serve European civilization and Christian culture and to spread them among Muslims, but with no ‘deception’. Although they followed specific scientific methods, they never felt any restraint to write ‘allegations’ and ‘poison’ against Islam whenever needed. People in this category were Louis Massignon and Snouck Hurgronje. 3) A rare third class consisted of serious and objective scholars, who had no prejudice against Islam and whose critical approaches were produced after deep investigation. He counted among these Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), Kampffmeyer, Max Mayerhoff (1874-1945), and others. This group, according to him, knew perfectly well that they were raised with negative attitudes widespread in the West against Islam. They tried, however, to contribute in a positive way to lessen the remaining medieval perceptions and bad image of Islam in Europe.¹²⁹

Arslān never read Wensinck’s work, but he included his name under his first category on the basis of Harrāwī’s articles. He had nothing to say on his dismissal from the Academy, but considered the case an internal question associated with Egyptian policy. As he was no Egyptian, he preferred to remain silent on that point.¹³⁰ Arslān must have known Wensinck personally, as he attended and presented a paper on Arabic philology at the International Congress of Orientalists in Leiden, presided by Snouck Hurgronje in 1931.¹³¹ During this event he had a short discussion with Snouck, and concluded that his views on Islam in Java proved that he was ‘a wise person’, ‘one of the less fanatic scholars’, and ‘a great orientalist.’¹³²

Arslān, on the other hand, deemed the Arabic translation of the *EI* a useful and necessary project for young generations, despite its many ‘biased attitudes’, ‘mistakes’ and ‘grave scientific errors’ on Islam. He assigned these errors to the first category of orientalists. Arslān made it clear to the translation committee that they should not underestimate the diversity of contributors in the *EI*, which would make their task more difficult. The advice of historians, chemists, geographers, jurists, philosophers, astronomers and theologians should be taken into consideration in order to be able to create a rather faultless translation, and to avoid the ‘deluding’ of young generations.¹³³

Farīd Wajdī, at the time the editor of Al-Azhar’s mouthpiece *Nūr al-islām*, was more concerned with ‘refuting the allegations’ of the orientalists. He wrote two articles in which he discussed the entries ‘Abū Bakr’ and ‘Ibrāhīm’ in the *EI*. He was not satisfied that the translators would publish the ‘allegations’ of the orientalists without detailed critique of their negative views of Islam. He moreover advised them to stop translating these

'allegations' in their entirety; it would be enough to mention them in footnotes. He described the translators' slight rejection of orientalist views without giving historical analysis as 'passive resistance'.¹³⁴ In his comment on Wensinck's article on Ibrāhīm, Wajdī did not mention the author by name, but referred to him as 'al-Mustashriq' (the orientalist). Wensinck was accused of being 'ignorant' of the essence of the Islamic message by postulating his theory only 'out of his fantasy'. He aimed at 'attacking the dignity of Islam' and at proving that Muhammad had invented the Quran. He insisted that Abraham and his monotheistic faith had been a central point of the Prophet's preaching since the earlier stages of his mission in Mecca. The figure of Abraham and his faith did not come into being as a response to the hostile attitude of the Jews in Medina towards Islam. The pre-Islamic Arabs and Jews alike were aware of the historical information that the Ka'ba had been built by Ibrāhīm.¹³⁵

Following Wajdī's line of thought, the Azharī scholar Muhammad 'Arafa, the Vice-Rector of the Faculty of Sharī'ah, criticized the articles 'Ihrām' and 'Ijmā'c'. 'Arafa entirely agreed with Harrāwī in his views about Wensinck.¹³⁶ He attacked Wensinck's article 'Ihrām', which asserted that 'the restrictions which were imposed by the *ihrām*, became too severe for Muhammad, so that during his stay in Mecca before the *hajj*, he conducted himself in a secular fashion.'¹³⁷ 'Arafa was disturbed by what he called 'inventions made by this author to deliberately offend Islam'. The discussions around the *hajj* in the *EI* were, according to him, selective in quoting Muslim traditions. Writers are always inclined to illustrate it as a very severe and ruthless ritual, while ignoring its spiritual and divine aspects. Therefore, Muslims must be cautious in solely depending on orientalists without verifying their information in authentic Muslim sources.¹³⁸ 'Arafa was much troubled that the *EI* would be spread among the Muslim educated class. He similarly lamented the fact that Muslims did not have their own encyclopaedias or simplified references on Islamic themes. He also suggested that the translation committee should contain one or two Muslim scholars, who would be able to correct such 'errors'.¹³⁹

The Egyptian Islamic writer Amīn al-Khūlī (1895-1966) found that rejoinders to the articles of the *EI*, such as of Wajdī and al-Dijwī, were based on arbitrary judgments. Contrary to Kipling's notion 'East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet', al-Khūlī believed that they have already met in various fields. In fact, the translation of the *EI* is good evidence that both could meet.¹⁴⁰ The authors, in Khūlī's views, lacked precision in formulating their premises and hypotheses; and therefore reached unconvincing results. Wajdī's comments were mostly rhetorical,

and did not follow Wensinck's arguments one-by-one. Al-Khūli at the end advised those writers to avoid any self-inclination or rhetorical analysis when they wrote on such subjects. They should, however, yield to the principles of ancient Arab logicians in their investigation of the *EI*.¹⁴¹

In his response to the anti-Wensinck campaign, the Egyptian man of letters and critic Zakī Mubārak (b. 1891) defended freedom of thought. Al-Harrāwī plainly warned him that his positive views on Wensinck would affect their friendship and be the cause of their separation. In *Al-Balāgh*, Mubārak maintained that any decision against Wensinck would seriously injure Egypt's scientific reputation. People in the modern age should be more inclined to freedom of thought, he stated. The only precondition restraining free research is ethics. In his view, Dutch orientalists were known to be meticulous and well-versed, since they were supported in their orientalism by a colony of fifty million Muslims. Although he had sometimes reached wrong conclusions, their most reliable scholar was Snouck Hurgronje. Mubārak encouraged his Oriental fellow-citizens to read orientalist works. 'Those people', he wrote, 'master Islamic Studies. They write in our absence and conclude without anybody checking them [...] If they communicate with us, they would be much more inclined to politeness and tact when being involved in writing on Islam.'¹⁴² Nevertheless, *Al-Jihād* criticized Mubārak for standing up for Wensinck, and attacked *Al-Balāgh* for its 'evil behaviour', and 'crooked policy in the name of defending freedom of thought'.¹⁴³

A suggestion was made by *Al-Hilāl* to Mubārak and al-Harrāwī to extend their debate on the 'advantages or disadvantages' of orientalists on its pages.¹⁴⁴ Al-Harrāwī reiterated his polemics against orientalism. Orientalists, he contended, portray Islam in an awful way, as they are generally ignorant of the reality of the East. He believed orientalists were trained in their countries of origin in order to serve their national policies, and not to have any sympathy with Islam or Muslims. That is why Western governments appropriate budgets for orientalist projects. In order to serve collective European policy, they have their international congresses. Also as soon as orientalist works appear, they are immediately translated into English, French and German.¹⁴⁵ Mubārak, on the other side, had no problem in admitting the 'favours' done to Islamic history and heritage by orientalist works. In his opinion, Muslims should engage with them in serious discussions as a group of scholars, by means of communication and cooperation. It was true that a group of orientalists might have served colonial policies, but they did not remain 'colonial tools' their entire lives. As a young man, he might have been attracted to finding a job as a diplo-

mat or translator in his country's colony, but in the course of time he might have changed his career to become a serious scholar whose imperial inclinations would gradually fade away.¹⁴⁶ Mubārak further argued that many of these orientalist dedicated the majority of their works to purely theoretical studies, which hardly served any imperial objective. It was not fair, therefore, to include them under this category.¹⁴⁷ As non-native speakers of Arabic, they were sometimes not able to grasp the subtle meaning of the language. Mubārak mentioned Margoliouth's work on *Yaqūt's Dictionary of Learned Men* as a good example despite its few mistakes.¹⁴⁸ Wensinck, in Mubārak's view, had greatly served Islam with his *Handbook*, a work which Al-Azhar Shaykhdom in its present state would be incapable of producing. Such works should be encouraged as they gave the history and culture of Islam more publicity in Europe and America.¹⁴⁹

The well-known Muslim writer Ahmad Amīn (1886-1954) admitted that the *EI* was the largest project ever embarked upon by orientalists in the modern time. It is the most important reference for students of Islam. Amīn was aware of the major difficulties perceived by Muslim intellectuals (especially the older generation) in translating this work. Among these difficulties were: 1) the alphabetical arrangement in Arabic, as the original work was not finished yet; 2) the difference in scholarly orientation between Western orientalists and Muslim scholars and the fact that some Western writers (such as Lammens) were imbued by fanaticism against Islam; 3) the changing character of scholarship due to new discoveries; 4) the fact that the authors sometimes devoted more space to insignificant items, while giving other important ones less attention. Amīn was critical to the translators' choice of Arabic terms, and maintained that their style of writing should be improved. Despite all these pitfalls, he believed that the young Muslim generation could acquire great benefits by reading the *EI*. In Amīn's view, the translation of this work would be an 'eye-opener' to the scholars in the East about how Westerners deal with their history and sciences. It would also be a stimulus to the coming generations to 'wake up'; and create their own glossaries and encyclopaedias instead of depending on the West.¹⁵⁰

The Egyptian revolutionary thinker Ismā'īl Mazhar (1891-1962) also praised the attempt of this group of young Muslims. The greatness of their work lies in the significance of the *EI* as a mine of information containing a huge variety of Islamic subjects including history, mysticism, theology, geography, etc. Mazhar, himself fond of encyclopaedic works, understood the complexity of their work. Like Amīn, he found that the translators still lacked knowledge and research in historical and linguistic

references. He carefully studied the Arabic translation, and raised many critical points concerning the technical Arabic equivalents to the English terms.¹⁵¹

In the same manner, the Muslim writer and former Egyptian imam in London ʿAbd al-Wahhab ʿAzzām (1894-1959) was impressed by the work done by the translators. However, he also found some technical mistakes in the first issue, especially with regard to names of people and places. ʿAzzām recommended Arab readers to support the publication of the *EI* by introducing serious remarks for the editor so that the translation would come out in its perfect shape. Therefore, he brought up these critical remarks so that the translators would avoid such errors in the remaining issues.¹⁵²

Conclusion

In this article, we have seen that many factors contributed to the ‘victimization’ of Wensinck’s partaking in the Egyptian Academy. One would conclude that a mixture of religious controversy and internal political interests in Egypt was the direct reason behind his dismissal. However, if we put the whole crisis in the context of *Weltpolitik*, another significant external political aspect could be assumed. As wartime brought out in the open the ties between orientalism and imperialism,¹⁵³ the interference of the European diplomats in Cairo in the Wensinck affair had negatively affected the so-called ‘academic freedom’ preached by other Western members. Entangled between the pressure of their governments and academic loyalty towards Wensinck, the four orientalist succumbed to the pressure to support the realization of their countries’ political aspirations and their sense of patriotism to the latter alternative.

The name of Snouck Hurgronje is hardly mentioned in the relevant remaining documents, while his name was the first on the list of Dutch candidates. He only appeared during the meeting with Gibb in Leiden. Snouck knew the risk of accepting an earlier invitation made by the Egyptian authorities for him to teach at the Egyptian University with other orientalist. He knew perfectly well the sensitivity among Muslims, especially regarding his conclusions about the place of Abraham in Islam. There are a few questions, which remain unsolved: had Snouck ever advised his student about the potential risk he was taking by accepting the membership at the Egyptian Academy? Was the appearance of Snouck’s name on the candidacy list a mere ‘cosmetic’ act of the Royal Dutch Acad-

emy? What was Snouck's response to the Royal Academy's decision to put his name on the list? Was he kept updated with all the developments?

In any case, Wensinck's name in the Muslim world remains much related to his works on *hadīth*, not to his dismissal from the Academy. After his death an anonymous contributor published an obituary in the Egyptian magazine *ar-Risāla* in which he praised his efforts in indexing the Prophetic traditions. The writer quoted Ridā's early positive view only. He decided not to give any elaboration on the crisis of the Academy saying: 'The story is well-known and the agitators are still alive. *Fī dhimmati Allah* (in God's hand) are those who devoted their lives to real science [...] and bringing the sources of Islam closer to its adherents.'¹⁵⁴

Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the fact that this campaign against Wensinck has had its impact on certain later Muslim attitudes. Usep Abdul Matin has studied a later interesting *fatwā* by the Azharī scholar Ahmad ash-Sharabāsī (1917-1980), who encouraged Muslims to use Wensinck's indices of *hadīth*.¹⁵⁵ Matin also indicated that some later Muslim scholars doubted Wensinck's views on Islam and depicted him as 'extremely malicious towards Islam'.¹⁵⁶ But Ahmad ash-Sharabāsī, who was more positive, concluded that 'whatever the case of the Dutch orientalist's religious convictions and reprehensible points is, he truly connected his name to the area of *hadīth* [...] Anybody immersed in the study of the tradition will continue to remember Wensinck with respect.'¹⁵⁷

Notes

- 1 My gratitude is due to my promoter Prof. Dr. P.S. van Koningsveld, Jason Caywood from Arizona and my colleague Drs. Muhammad Ghaly for reading and giving comments on the draft of the paper.
- 2 In 1933 the Egyptian Ministry of Education financed a committee for the translation of the *EI*. The Egyptian prince and well-known philanthropist Omar Tusun (1872-1944) was one of the supporters of the project. Three Egyptian graduates in history and philosophy, Muhammad Thābit al-Fandī, Ahmad al-Shantanāwī and Ibrāhīm Zakī Khurshid, were appointed to take up the task. In October the first issue appeared. The translation was mainly aimed at 'widening the horizons of Arab readers with regard to Islamic history and civilization'. The translators considered the role of the Encyclopaedia as more effective than the universities in shaping Muslim public opinion. Due to its deep investigation and easy style of structure and language, it was also proposed 'to sustain [Muslim] traditions and expose their high values'. They

- saw their contribution as important as all attempts of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism, such as the Language Academy and the International Islamic Congress. See *Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-islāmiyya*, Vol. 1, 1, October 1933, pp. 3-5.
- 3 About the Muslim perspective on Abraham, see, Khalil Athamina, 'Abraham in Islamic Perspective: Reflections on the Development of Monotheism in Pre-Islamic Arabia' in: *Der Islam*, Vol. 81, 2004, pp. 184-205.
- 4 F. Krenkow, 'Arent Jan Wensinck' in: *Islamic Culture: an English Quarterly*, Hyderabad-Deccan: The Islamic Culture Board, 1940, Vol. xiv, p. 234.
- 5 Snouck Hurgronje, *Het Mekkaansche feest*, Leiden, 1880. Cf. A. Sprenger, *Das Leben und die Lehre des Mohammad*, Berlin, 1869; A. J. Wensinck, 'Ibrāhīm' in: *El1*, II, 432a. See the critical views, Y. Moubarac, *Abraham dans le Coran*, Paris 1958; Rudi Paret, 'Ibrāhīm' in: *El2*, III, 980a.
- 6 Athamina, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
- 7 Ronen Raz, *The Transparent Mirror: Arab Intellectuals ad Orientalism*, unpublished PhD dissertation, Princeton University, 1997, pp. 135-136. Cf. Joseph H. Escovitz, 'Orientalists and Orientalism in the Writings of Muhammad Kurd Ali' in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 15, 1, February 1983, pp. 95-109.
- 8 Donald Malcolm Reid, 'Cairo University and the Orientalists' in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 19, 1, 1987, p. 59.
- 9 *Ibid.*, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo, 1990, p. 42.
- 10 For more about the affair, see Reid (1987), pp. 62-64.
- 11 Alī Abd ar-Rāziq, *Al-Islām wa-Usūl al-Hukm*, Cairo, 1925.
- 12 Tāha Husayn, *Fī ash-shi'r al-jāhili*, Cairo: Matba'at Dār al-Kutub al-Misriyya, 1st ed., 1926. Cf. Muhammad al-Khidr Husayn, *Naqd kitāb fī ash-shi'r al-jāhili*, A. at-Tunusī (ed.), 2nd ed., Cairo, 1977.
- 13 My gratitude goes to Prof. Dr. P.S. van Koningsveld for giving me copies of this collection, which is presently found at the Library of Leiden University.
- 14 Bibliothek der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Halle (Saale), August Fischer Nachlass, fi 063, fi 064 and fi 099. I am grateful to my friend Tarek Mohamed Ali, PhD candidate at the Germanistisches Institut in Halle, for sending me copies of these letters.
- 15 His full name is Cornelis Hendrik Joan Schuller tot Peursum, born in Renkum on July 6, 1885. In 1922-1925, he served as a secretary (second class) at the Consulate in Cairo. In 1925, he was placed in Budapest. He became the Chargé d'Affaires of the Netherlands in different countries, such as Rio de Janeiro, Madrid, Bogotá, Quito, and Cairo. My thanks to Mr. Paul C. Schuller tot Peursum for giving access to the website of his family's genealogy: <http://www.schuller-genealogie.com/genealogie/startpagina.htm>, accessed on January 5,

2007. His file is to be found in the Nationaal Archief – Den Haag, archief van het gezantschap in Egypte (Caïro) [1881] 1921-1954 [1961], Nummertoeegang 2.05.143, Inventarisnummer 632.
- 16 He was appointed as a Councilor in 1925. He was in charge of the situation of Dutch-Indian students in Cairo. In 1928 he was selected to stay for one month in Jeddah, arranged by the Dutch Council there, in order to get into contact with many of them, and to be acquainted with their lives. The file of his activities is also to be found in Het Nationaal Archief – Den Haag, Archief van het Gezantschap in Egypte (Caïro) [1881] 1921-1954 [1961], Nummertoeegang 2.05.143, Inventarisnummer 634.
- 17 Nationaal Archief – Den Haag, archief van het gezantschap in Egypte (Caïro) [1881] 1921-1954 [1961], Nummertoeegang 2.05.143, Inventarisnummer 625.
- 18 Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem. Nummertoeegang 64, Inventarisnummer 25.
- 19 Ibrāhīm Madkūr, *Majmaʿ al-lughā al-arabiyya fī thalathīn ʿām* (1932-1962), Cairo, 1964-1966; the third volume has been edited by Mahdi ʿAllām.
- 20 Rached Hamzaoui, *L'Academie de langue arabe du Caire: histoire et oeuvre*, Tunis: Université de Tunis, 1975, p. 69: 'Le cas de Wensinck posait en fait le problème de la présence des orientalistes à l'Académie ce qui mérite, d'être exposé ici dans la mesure où cette présence pouvait influencer sur la méthode de travail de l'Académie, sur la façon d'aborder les problèmes de la langue et de leur trouver des solutions modernes.'
- 21 P.S. van Koningsveld, *Snouck Hurgronje en de islam*, Leiden: Documentatiebureau Islam-Christendom, Faculteit der Godgeleerdheid, 1988, pp. 18-23. Van Koningsveld wrote his remarks as reponse to F. Schröder: 'Orientalistische retoriek: Van Koningsveld over de vuile handen van Snouck Hurgronje' in: *De Gids*, Vol. 134, 1980, 785-806. In that work, Schröder placed the latter's critique of Snouck in the ideological tradition of Muslim opponents to orientalists, such as those involved in the anti-Wensinck campaign (especially al-Harrāwī).
- 22 More about his life and works, see , for example, L Virginia Vacca, *Oriente moderno*, Vol. 19, 1939, pp. 673-675; J. Pedersen, *Acta orientalia*, 18, 1940, pp. 161-163; J. Huizinga, *Jaarboek der Koninklijke Nederlandsche Akademie van Wetenschappen 1939-40*, Amsterdam, 1940, pp. 214-224; W.C. van Unnik, 'Professor A.J. Wensinck en de studie van de oosterse mystiek' in: A.J. Bronkhorst (ed.), *Woorden gaan leven. Opstellen van en over Willem Cornelis van Unnik*, Kampen, 1979, pp. 238-263; Louis Massignon, 'A.J. Wensinck' in: *Journal Asiatique* (1941-1942), pp. 213-215; Krenkow, op. cit. p. 234; *Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland* , Vol. 4, 1994, The Hague, available at: <http://www.inghist.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn4/wensinck>; accessed on January 12, 2007.

- 23 See his brochure, *De Nederlandsch-Hervormde Kerk en de Gemeente van Christus: Gedachten naar aanleiding van de Reorganisatiebeweging*, Rotterdam: Voorhoeve, 1939.
- 24 Madkūr, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 16.
- 25 About the Academy and its activities, see, for instance, *Al-Manār*, Vol. 19, 2, Ramdān 1334/ July 1916, pp. 110ff; Vol. 20, 1, Shawwāl 1335/ July 1917, pp. 61ff.
- 26 Yunan Labib Rizk, 'Chronicles' in: *Al-Ahram Weekly*, No. 647, July 2003.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid. Heading the list of the survey were Muhammad Farīd Wajdī, Tāha Husayn, Dawūd Barakāt, Ahmad Al-Iskandarī, Khalīl Matrān, Ahmad Lutfī Al-Sayyid, ʿAlī Al-Jārim, ʿAbbās Al-ʿAqqād, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Al-Bishrī, Muhammad Husayn Haykal and Muhammad Rashīd Ridā. Of these, only two, al-Iskandarī and al-Jārim, had won in the survey conducted by *Al-Ahrām*.
- 29 Rizk, *op. cit.*
- 30 Rashed, *op. cit.*, p. 70. *Oriente Moderno*, 12, 1932, p. 460.
- 31 Rizk, *op. cit.*
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Rizk, *op. cit.*
- 35 As cited in Van Koningsveld, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- 36 For more about him, see, M. Rosen-Ayalon (ed.), *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet*, Jerusalem, 1977.
- 37 Letter Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, January 19, 1933/ No. 78.34. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. In this meeting the minister told Schuller about his plan of dispatching three Egyptian graduates from Al-Azhar and Dār al-ʿUlūm to study Arabic philology in Europe, and whether it was possible to send one of them to study in Leiden. It seems that the whole idea was never put into practice due to the later developments around the Wensinck crisis.
- 38 Letter from the Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen/ Afdeling Letterkunde to the Dutch Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences, Amsterdam, No. 16, March 18, 1933.
- 39 *Al-Ahrām*, November 3, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 40 Letter Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cairo, June 13, 1933/ No. 529/215 NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. Schuller did not forget to mention that each member was supposed to get reimbursement of travelling expenses, three Egyptian pounds for accommodation a day, and two pounds as allowance for each meeting.

- 41 Letter, Wensinck to Braat, October 16, 1933, Leiden – Witte Singel 21. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. Braat was Wensinck's contact person at the Consulate.
- 42 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Egyptian Minister of Education, Cairo, June 26, 1933, NNo. 562. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 43 Rizk, *op. cit.*
- 44 As cited in NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 45 *Al-Jihād*, October 30, 1933; November 3 and 4, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 46 Telegram, Bart to Wensinck, Cairo, October 21, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 47 Telegram, Wensinck to Braat, Leiden – Witte Singel, October 22, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 48 Letter, Wensinck to Braat, October 25, 1933, Leiden. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 49 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, October 24, 1933, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625
- 50 'Aanvallen van de Arabische pers op Prof. Wensinck', Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 1097/428, November 7, 1933, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 51 Ibid. About the Wafd and religious issues and missionary work, see, Leland Bowie, 'The Copts, the Wafd, and Religious Issues in Egyptian Politics' in: *The Muslim World*, 67, 2, 1977, pp. 106-126. Cf. Umar Ryad, 'Muslim Response to Missionary Activities in Egypt: With a Special Reference to the Al-Azhar High Corps of 'Ulamā' (1925-1935)' in: Heleen Murre-van den Berg (ed.), *New Faith in Ancient Lands: Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 281-307.
- 52 Letter, Wensinck to Braat, October 30, 1933, Leiden – Witte Singel. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 53 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Egyptian Minister of Education, November 1, 1933, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 54 *Al-Ahrām* (November 3, 1933). NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 55 Letter, Wensinck to Braat, November 8, 1933, Leiden. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 56 About him, see, Madkūr, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 21-22; Khayr ad-Dīn az-Zirikli, *Al-Ālam*, Beirut, 2002, Vol. 1, p. 190.
- 57 *Al-Ahrām*, November 6, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 58 *Al-Jihād*, November 7, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.

- 59 'Aanvallen van de Arabische pers op Prof. Wensinck', *op. cit.*
- 60 *Al-Ahrām*, November 7, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 61 The Minister of Foreign Affairs to Schuller tot Peursum, No. 38431/195, The Hague, November 20, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 62 Schuller tot Peursum to Hilmi ʿĪsā Pasha, No. 1197, November 28, 1933, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 63 *Al-Ahrām* (November 28, 1933). NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 64 Letter Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 4, 1933, No. 1221/470, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 65 Letter Secretary General of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs to Schuller tot Peursum, NNo. 40417./210, 4 December 1933, The Hague. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 66 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, December 18, 1933, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection
- 67 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, December 22, 1933, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 68 Letter, Massignon to Gibb, December 19, 1933, Paris. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 69 Letter, Fischer to Massignon, December 25, 1933, Leipzig. Van Koningsveld's collection. Letter, Nallino to Fischer, December 22, 1933, Rome. Halle Collection.
- 70 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, January 6, 1934, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 Letter, Fischer to Massignon, January 8, 1934, Leipzig. Halle collection
- 73 Ibid.: 'Ich muss [...] auf die Wünsche meiner Regierung eine gewisse Rücksicht nehmen. Aber dieses könnte und würde mich nicht zwingen nach Kairo zu gehen, wenn ich erklärte, dass mir unter gegebenen Umständen ein Zusammenarbeiten mit der Akademie unmöglich wäre.'
- 74 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, January 12, 1934, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 75 Letter Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 4, 1933, NNo. 1221/470, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 76 Letter Schuller tot Peursum to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, December 8, 1933, NNo. 1222/471, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 77 Telegram, Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Schuller tot Peursum, No. 1, January 12, 1933, The Hague. Letter, A.M. Snouck Hurgronje, Secretary General of

- the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Schuller tot Peursum, No. 1890/16, January 17, 1933, The Hague. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 78 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 110/29, January 15, 1933, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 See, H.H. Biesterfeldt, 'Enno Littmann: Leben und Arbeit. Ein autobiographisches Fragment (1875-1904)' in: *Oriens*, Vol. 29, 1986, pp. 1-101
- 81 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 163/47, Prof. Wensinck, vertrouwlijk, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 82 Letter, Wensinck to Braat, February 14, 1934, Leiden – Witte Singel. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. About Bergsträsser, see his obituary by Max Meyerhof 'Gotthelf Bergsträsser (1886-1933)' in: *Isis*, Vol. 25, 1, May 1936, pp. 60-62.
- 83 Maria Höfner, *The Library of Enno Littmann (1875-1958)*, Leiden: Brill, 1959, p. xix: 'König Fuad, der als Prinz die ägyptische Universität geschaffen hatte, begründete 1934 die arabische Sprachakademie und wünschte, dass ich eins der fünf europäischen Mitglieder sein sollte.'
- 84 Letter, Prof. Wensinck, vertrouwlijk, *op. cit.*
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Reid (1987), p. 55.
- 87 Letter, Prof. Wensinck, vertrouwlijk, *op. cit.*
- 88 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 469/151, April 18, 1934, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 89 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 788/239, June 25, 1934, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. Schuller reported in the earlier letter that the Minister had handed them a written statement, but in this letter he corrected his information that it was only an oral statement.
- 90 Letter, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs to Schuller tot Peursum, The Hague, No. 17089/94, June 19, 1934. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, No. 1092/332, October 26, 1934, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625: 'Je m'étonne que le Gouvernement Néederlandais persiste à vouloir imposer au Gouvernement Egyptien un orientaliste qui avait écrit contre la religion officielle de l'Egypte.'
- 93 Ibid.

- 94 Letter, Schuller tot Peursum to Ibrāhīm Kamāl Bey, No. 1209, November 30, 1934, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625. Schuller only received a letter in which the Egyptian Minister would put this matter into consideration. Letter, Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Dutch Consulate, No. 21.29.9. 38, December 9, Cairo. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 95 Letter, Massignon to Gibb, Nallino and Fischer, August 21, 1934, Paris. Halle collection.
- 96 Letter, Fischer to Massignon, September 2, 1934, Leipzig. Collection Halle (Saale): 'Unser in Kairo gegebenes Versprechen hat seine Schranke an unseren Pflichten gegen Wensinck, der ein Recht hat von uns aufgeklärt zu werden, und wenigstens ich habe dieses Versprechen nur mit dieser Einschränkung abgegeben. [...] Ich bin [...] der Meinung, dass ein Brief ebenso gut, vielleicht noch besser sein würde. [...] Höre ich nichts Andres von Ihnen, dann schreibe ich in etwa 8 Tagen Wensinck dass ich meine Absicht ihm über unsre Schritte in Kairo zu berichten nicht ausführen kann.'
- 97 Letter, Massignon to Fischer, Nallino and Gibb, September 6, 1934, Paris. Collection Halle (Saale). Due to his lack of time and money, Fischer apologized that he could not visit Leiden; Massignon was hindered because of his wife's sickness, and Nallino due to the big distance.
- 98 Letter, Fischer to Massignon, Nallino and Gibb, September 9, 1934, Leipzig. Halle (Saale) collection.
- 99 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, September 12, 1934, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 100 Letter, Gibb to Fischer, Massignon and Nallino, September 20, 1934, Sutton, Surrey. Halle (Saale) collection.
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 Ibid.
- 103 Ibid.
- 104 Ibid.
- 105 Ibid.
- 106 Letter, Wensinck to Gibb, October 25, 1934, Leiden. Halle collection.
- 107 Ibid.
- 108 Letter, Gibb to Massignon, September 20, 1934, Sutton, Surrey. Van Koningsveld's collection.
- 109 About his life, see Daniel van der Zande, *Martinus Th. Houtsma, 1851-1943: een bijdrage aan de geschiedenis van de orientalistiek in Nederland en Europa*, PhD dissertation, University of Utrecht, 2000.
- 110 For more about the history of the *EI*, see: Ch. Pellat; Vesel; E. van Donzel, 'Mawsū'a', in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Brill Online. 14 December 2006 <http://>

- www.encyislam.brill.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0718l, see also, A.J. Wensinck, 'De Encyclopedie van den Islam' in: *Oostersch Instituut–Leiden, Jaarverslag 1927-1928*, Leiden 1929, pp. 15-7; M.Th. Houtsma and J.H. Kramers, 'De wordingsgeschiedenis van de Encyclopaedie van den Islam' in: *ibid.*, *Jaarverslag 1941*, Leiden 1942, pp. 9-20.
- 111 Ron Shaham, 'Egyptian Judge in a Period of Change: Qadi Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, 1892-1958' in: *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 119, 1999, pp. 440-455.
- 112 Letter, Wensinck to Ridā, September 1, 1930, Leiden; the letter is found among the personal papers of Ridā in his family archive.
- 113 In Dutch: zonder beenen. Wensinck probably he means that due to his thick body and the religious uniform it was difficult to see his leg.
- 114 See Wensinck's travel diary in Egypt, Jeddah, Syria and Jerusalem (end 1929-early 1930), Leiden University Library, p. 38. UB Bijzondere Collecties (KL) – Or. 25.686.
- 115 *Miftāh kunūz as-sunna*, Cairo: Matba'at Misr, 1934. As is indicated in his letter to 'Abd Al-Bāqī, Wensinck was pleased with the corrections made by the translator in the Arabic edition. Letter, March 5, 1934.
- 116 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 117 'Muqaddimat miftāh kunūz as-sunna' in: *Al-Manār*, Vol. 34, 4, Rabī' al-Ākhir 1353/ August 1934, pp. 296-297.
- 118 *Al-Wahy al-muhammadi*, Al-Manār Press, 1935.
- 119 *Al-Manār*, Vol. 35, 1, Rabī' al-Awwal 1354/ July 1935, pp. 36-37.
- 120 *Al-Manār*, Vol. 33, 6, Rajab 1352/ October 1933, p. 477.
- 121 See, *Al-Manār*, Vol. 26, 8, Rajab 1344/ February 1926, p. 638.
- 122 About their conflict, see: R. Ridā, *Al-Manār wa Al-Azhar*, Cairo, 1353, p. 15f; Yūsuf al-Dijwī, 'Sāhib al-Manār' in: *Majallat nūr al-islām*, Vol. 3, 5, Jumāda al-Ūlā 1351/1932, p. 337; Daniel Neil Crecelius, *The Ulama and the State in Modern Egypt*, Princeton University, PhD dissertation, 1967, pp. 314-315.
- 123 About his life and works, see Muhammad Tāha al-Hājirī. *Muhammad Farīd Wajdī: hayātuh wa-āthāruh*. Cairo: The Arab League, 1970.
- 124 *Al-Manār*, Vol. 33, 6, p. 478.
- 125 *Al-Manār*, Vol. 33, 8, Ramadan 1352/ December 1933, p. 630.
- 126 'Dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-islāmiyya wa-mā fihā min mafāsīd' in: *Al-Manār*, Vol. 34, 5, Jumāda al-Ākhira 1353/ October 1934, pp. 386-387.
- 127 *Ibid.*
- 128 *Ibid.*
- 129 Shakīb Arslān, 'Al-Mustashriqūn wa-mawqifuhum al-khatir min al-islām' in: *Al-Manār* (quoted from *Al-Jihād*), Vol. 33/6, Rajab 1352/ October 1933, pp. 435-440.

- 130 Ibid., p. 436.
- 131 Snouck Hurgronje (ed.), *Actes du XVIIIe Congres International des Orientalistes, Leiden, 7-12 septembre 1931*, Leiden: Brill, 1932.
- 132 See his article in *Hādīr al-‘ālam al-islāmī*, Vol. 3, Cairo: Matba‘at al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1352 AH., pp. 372-374.
- 133 Arslān, ‘Al-Mustashriqūn’, *op. cit.*, p. 439.
- 134 Farīd Wajdī, ‘Daḥd muftaryāt al-mustashriqīn: fī sirat Abī Bakr al-Siddiq’ in: *Nūr al-islām*, Vol. 5, 3, Rabī‘ al-Awwal 1353/ 1934, p. 213.
- 135 Farīd Wajdī, ‘Daḥd muftaryāt al-mustashriqīn’ in: *Nūr al-Islām* Vol. 5/9 (Ramadān 1353/ 1934), pp. 599-607.
- 136 *Al-Balāgh*, 26 October 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 137 Muhammad ‘Arafa, ‘Dā’irat al-ma‘ārif al-islāmiyya wa-l-khalt fī al-tārīkh wa-l-haqā’iq al-‘ilmiyya’ in: *Nur al-islām*, Vol. 5/8, Sha‘bān 1353/ 1934, pp. 556-566.
- 138 Ibid.; ‘Arafa incorrectly cited the title of Hurgronje’s thesis as *Die Mekkani-sche Feste*.
- 139 Ibid., ‘Dā’irat al-ma‘ārif al-islāmiyya: ra’yuhā fī Abī Hurayrah’ in: *Nūr al-islām*, Vol. 5/9, Ramadān 1353/ 1934, p. 646.
- 140 Amīn al-Khūlī, ‘Ash-Sharq wa-l-gharb yaltaqiyān’ in: *Al-Hilāl* Vol. 42/4 (February 1, 1934), pp. 444-448.
- 141 Ibid., p. 448.
- 142 *Al-Balāgh*, November 10, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 143 *Al-Jihād*, November 11, 1933. NA. Gezantschap in Egypte, 205.143, Inv. No. 625.
- 144 ‘Ra’yān muta‘āridān: hal darar al-mustashriqīn akthar min naf‘ihim’ in: *Al-Hilāl*, Vol. 42, 3, January 1, 1934, pp. 321-328.
- 145 Ibid., pp. 322-323.
- 146 Ibid., p. 325.
- 147 Ibid., pp. 325-326.
- 148 Ibid., pp. 325-326. D.S. Margoliouth (ed.), *The Irshād al-Arib ilā Ma‘rifat al-Adīb or Dictionary of Learned Men of Yāqūt*, 7 Vols., London: Luzac, 1923-1931.
- 149 Ibid., p. 326.
- 150 Ahmad Amīn, ‘Dā’irat al-ma‘ārif al-islāmiyya’ in: *Ar-Risāla*, Vol. 1, 19, October 15, 1933, pp. 37-38.
- 151 Ismā‘īl Mazhar, ‘Dā’irat al-ma‘ārif al-islāmiyya: naqd wa-taqdīr’ in: *Ar-Risāla*, 2 articles, Vol. 1, 19-20, October 15 – November 1, 1933. For instance, the word ‘schism’ is translated as ‘*qism*’, but it should be ‘*firqa*’; ‘heretics’ as ‘*kufir*’, while it should be ‘*hartaqā*’, etc.

- 152 ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ʿAzzām, ‘Dā’irat al-maʿārif al-islāmiyya: aghlāt al-karrāsa al-ūlā’ in: *Ar-Risāla*, Vol. 1, 20, November 1933, pp. 39-40.
- 153 Reid (1990), p. 41.
- 154 ‘Wafāt al-Mustashriq Wensinck’ in: *Ar-Risāla*, Vol. 7, 329, October 23, 1939. A part of it is also quoted by Raz, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-145.
- 155 Usep Abdul Matin, *The Fatwā of Ahmad al-Syrabāsī on Encouraging Muslims to use Wensinck’s Concordance and Handbook*, unpublished paper, Seminar Problems and Methods of Islamic Studies, Islam and the West: Their Mutual Relations as Reflected in Fatwā-Literature, MA programme, Leiden University, 1999, p. 38.
- 156 Matin, *op. cit.*, p. 38.
- 157 Ibid.

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