A BRIEF HISTORY OF CAIRO UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1908

Created By Prof Hamed A. Ead
Professor of Chemistry, Faculty of Science
As a major offshoot of the national Egyptian movement that goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, a number of national leaders, enlightenment pioneers and social thinkers called for the establishment of an Egyptian university, to be a lighthouse of liberal thought and the basis of a comprehensive academic revival in all fields of knowledge in order to be able to cope with the international scientific and academic advancement.
By May 1908, the Royal Palace chose the administrative council of the project of EU. Prince Ahmed Fouad was rector; the Egyptian University came into being and was officially inaugurated on December 21, 1908. A great ceremony was held at the Legislative Council Hall, attended by Khedive Abbas II and foreign heads of state. Study began at the university in the evening of the inauguration day in the form of general lectures to be given in diverse places such as the Legislative Council Hall, High Schools Club and Dar AL-Garida.
TIME LINE OF CAIRO UNIVERSITY NAMING

- **23 December 1908**: National University
- **11 March 1925**: Egyptian University
- **23 May 1940**: Fouad I University
- **23 December 1952**: Cairo University

**National University** → **Egyptian University** → **Fouad I University** → **Cairo University**
European professors dominated the first generation of faculty while promising Egyptian students were sent abroad to train for future teaching positions.
CAIRO UNIVERSITY: History, Magnitude & Facts

- Established 1908 (some faculties much earlier. Eg. Faculty of Eng. 1816 & Faculty of Medicine 1827)
- 25 Faculties & Institutes

- 13 Hospitals (4000 Beds)
- 3 Nobel Prize winners Alumni (+Other International Prizes)
- Large number of faculty members educated in top notch world universities (Outstanding Researchers & Educators)
- Within the Middle East & Africa, CU Degree is regarded as a prestigious “Branded” degree
SUCCESS INDICATORS

No. of Int. Publications (SciVal)

- CU = 18.6% of all Egyptian Int. Publications
- Only Egyptian University (and One of 5 Arab Universities) in Top 500 Rank according to Shanghai Ranking
- 10 Subject Areas in Top Ranks According to Latest QS Ranking
- Overall CU QS Rank Top 490

Tens of Millions EGP direct contracts with industry
- Long list of faculty & student prizes

The 2nd Belt & Road Initiative - University President’s Forum
EXAMPLES OF FACULTY MEMBERS & STUDENTS OUTSTANDING Projects
Cairo University, a beacon for Knowledge, Culture and Fine Arts
Cairo University is one of the keys to modern Egypt. As God gave Egypt a genius position, Cairo University gave an important position, in terms of moderation, diversity and excellence, which distinguished its independent and unique character from the rest of the universities.

Most of its colleges and institutes are located in the governorates of Giza and Cairo; it is mediated by urban and rural areas and by an agricultural community as well as by the industrial community that is connected to the new urban communities of 6th October City.
Cairo University with its historical depth- is the oldest Egyptian and Arab universities specialized in science, literature, medicine, engineering and other scientific schools different,

Cairo University recognized the unique needs of its community, and then sought seriously to meet those needs.

Cairo University also has a distinguished community of scientists and researchers who participate in the application of scientific research activities distinguished to serve the community and to develop the environment.
CAIRO UNIVERSITY OLD BUILDINGS

- **The main university building:** It is one of the historic buildings, designed by French engineers. The building is distinguished by the presence of the dome which became a symbol of Cairo University. It contains the offices of the university president and the deputies.

- **The Watch Tower:** Next to the main building, it was built in 1937 by the engineer who built the Big Ben watch in London. The clock is 40 meters high, topped by a hexagonal room with windows that repair the clock.

- **Ahmed Lotfi Hall:** The official hall for the meetings of the University Council, equipped with sound and projection equipment and nine for the number of 60:65
CAIRO UNIVERSITY OLD BUILDINGS

• The Great Hall of Ceremonies: It was built in 1929, a duplicate of the Egyptian Opera House. The hall was opened in 1935 on an area of 3160 square meters, topped by a dome shaped like a hemisphere, 52 meters high. This dome ends with a set of windows in all directions to extend the hall with natural light. The main hall can accommodate 1099 seats, of which 148 seats will be equipped with an interpreter in the first row. The first floor will occupy 1269 seats and the upper floors will have 1264 seats. In the last decade, the hall has been renovated, carpeted and equipped with state-of-the-art lighting and central air conditioning. In addition to a radio room and an interpretation room, the hall has a large theater area of 400m² and there is an orchestra hall under this theater, with two lights on the right and two on the left. The Grand Ballroom of the University of Cairo witnessed many national events, where speeches were made by the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the late President Anwar Sadat and President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi, as well as speeches by US President Barack Obama and the singing lady Umm Kulthum revived many of her concerts in the hall of the University Cairo.
The main university building
The Great Hall of Ceremonies
EUROPEAN PROFESSORS IN EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY
The European professors in the Egyptian University fall into two categories: those who lectured in French or English on topics unrelated to the Middle East, and orientalists who lectured in Arabic on Arab and Islamic subjects.

France, England, Italy, and to a lesser extent Germany all manage for influence at the private university depending on their political power.

Austria-Hungary lost its chance when Ignaz Goldziher turned down Fuad’s invitation to teach.

The Netherlands’ Snouck-Hurgronje, who had worked seventeen years for the Dutch East India administration, also declined. Hurgronje was a distinguished scholar, but Fuad must have been unaware of his hostility to Islam.

England had its political and military control and economic preponderance on Egypt.

In 1909 she took 50% of Egypt’s exports and supplied 30% of her imports. Rector Fuad spoke no English and felt no cultural affinity for England.

It was the French professor of literature, Albert Pauphilet, rather than his English counterpart, who spoke for the foreign community at the 1908 opening ceremonies."
Ratios of European Professors to the Egyptian university (1908-1951) (Subject and country)
English Professors 43%
French Professors 41%
German Professors 4%
Russian Professors 2%
Austrian Professors 3%
Italian Professors 3%
Swedish Professors 3%
Belgian Professors 1%
Swiss Professors 0.5%
### GERMAN PROFESSORS IN EGYPTIAN UNIVERSITY

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
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ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG
IN HIS 125TH BIRTHDAY
(28 OCTOBER 1892, BERLIN- 10 JANUARY 1985, BERLIN)

Faculty of Science, Cairo University
Head of Chemistry Department
“Father of Photochemistry in Egypt”
1937-1957
THE STORY OF PHOTOCHEMISTRY IN EGYPT

- Centuries ago, the Egyptians used the powdered seeds of plant which grew in the Nile delta to cure certain skin diseases (Leukoderma).
- The powdered seeds of Ammi majus L. were eaten and the depigmented areas of the skin were then exposed to sunlight.
- The areas thus treated showed blistering followed by pigmentation.
- Then it gradually assumed the color of the surrounding skin. Exposure to sunlight was to be necessary.
- This was one of the first applications of photochemistry in medicine.
ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG TIMELINE

1892
Born in Berlin

1912
he studied chemistry in Freiburg (Br.), Bonn and Berlin

1919
he was compiled with a thesis at the TH Charlottenburg with Prof Hugo Simonis entitled "Contributions to the

1920
he became an assistant

1922
habilitated with Robert Pschorr

1923
he married his youthful friend Elisabeth Seyffardt from Bonn

1924
his daughter was born

1924
Schönberg was appointed professor at the Technical University, Berlin

1932
he was elected to the board of the German Chemical Society

1934
he went to Scotland with his family, stayed there until 1937 as visiting prof. at Univ. Edinburgh

1937
his application for a position, to Fouad I University at Cairo, Egypt, was successful

1937-1957
an impressive number of publications in preparative organic photochemistry came out from Egypt.

1937
In Egypt, he faced difficulties, but he succeeded, to expand chemical dept. to modern chemistry.

1958
Schönberg moved to Berlin and became a full professor (em.) at his old university, Technical University Berlin, there Schönberg

1982
TH Univ was obliged to provide laboratory, where he remained active until the end of 1982 with a small res. group.

1985
Death on 10 January 1985 in Berlin

By Prof. Hamed A. Ead
Cairo University, Giza, Egypt
Map of Alexander Schönberg timeline
STORY OF ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG

- Alexander Schönberg was born in 1892 as the only child of a Prussian landlord in Berlin. His mother came from an old family from Berlin. After the Abitur, Schönberg began studying chemistry at the University of Bonn.

- After the outbreak of the 1st World War, Schönberg went to Freiburg and Aachen to continue his studies. Toward the end of the war, he was transferred to Berlin, where he finished his studies at the Friedrich-Wilhelm-University in Berlin (today's Humboldt University).

- His doctoral thesis was about chromones, Schönberg completed the work of Hugo Simonis at the Technical University of Charlottenburg (now the Technical University of Berlin) in 1919.

- In 1920, he became an assistant, and habilitated in 1922 with Robert Pschorr.
- In 1923 he married his youthful friend Elisabeth Seyffardt from Bonn.
- In 1924 a daughter was born to the married couple,
- In 1926 Schönberg was appointed professor by the Technical University.
Schönberg was quickly known by his scientific publications, so that in 1932 he was elected to the board of the German Chemical Society. He was invited by the Scottish University of Edinburgh as a guest professor at the Medical Faculty was very much situated. Schönberg went to Scotland with his wife and daughter and stayed there until 1937.
STORY OF ALEXANDER SCHÖNBERG IN EGYPT

- In 1937 Schönberg's application for a position, which had been send to Fouad I University at Cairo, Egypt, was successful, he was recommended by Richard Willstätter (Nobel Prize for Chemistry).
- This signaled the start of research in the field of preparative photochemistry in Egypt.
- As a matter of fact, this field was then experiencing a revival following a dormant period after the studies of Ciamician at the beginning of the century.
- At that time, there was only one university in Egypt which was called Fouad I University after King Fouad.
- This university is now Cairo University, the Faculty of Science was at Abassia, one of the old parts of Cairo where the affluent used to live in the thirties.
- The building of the faculty of science was an annex of Zaafran Palace, one of the former Kedewi Ismail Palaces.
Chemistry under Prof. A. Schoenberg [whose communications in Nature have been spread over a long period] is a very big Department with a wide research programme, concerning photochemical reaction in sunlight, the synthesis of substances with sex-hormone properties (non-steroid estrogens) and their applications.

The latter are worked out in collaboration partly with Dr. J. M. Robson in Edinburgh (prolonged action on mice, low toxicity) and partly with Prof. Ahmed Ghoneim, Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo.

Hens receiving Stilbene began to lay eggs more than one month earlier than the control group.
The shining sun of Egypt (@3500 hr. per year) inspired Professor Schönberg to use organic photochemistry came out from Egypt. These were submitted either by Professor Schönberg and his students or by some of his Egyptian colleagues. sunlight for initiating organic reactions. His great interest in his work and the enthusiasm of young Egyptian graduates at that time led to the establishment of an extensive research program in applied, pharmaceutical, and medicinal chemistry. Members of his school took their places in chemistry departments in Egyptian universities and in the National Research Centre in Cairo. Highly distinguished among them was the late Prof. Ahmed Mustafa, who continued as head of the school after the departure of Professor Schonberg in 1957.
During this period (1937-1957) an impressive number of publications in preparative work. Special attention was given to the chemistry of the medicinal herbs of the Islamic culture. Another subject of interest was organic sulfur compounds. One of the fundamental reactions discovered by the group was the famous Schönberg-Mustafa reaction, published in 1944 about the photo induced (4+2) cycloaddition of 0-quinones to olefinic double bonds giving 1,4-dioxene derivatives.

Later, the stereochemistry of this reaction was investigated. Thus, starting with either cis- or trans-stilbene, the corresponding cis and trans isomers of IV were obtained.

The first edition of "Preparative Organische Photochemie, one of first comprehensive books on photochemistry of organic molecules, was written in Cairo by Prof. Schönberg with the assistance of Prof. Ahmed Mustafa. It was published in 1958. The second edition was written in English and appeared in 1968).
Two years ago, on the occasion of the 85th birthday of Prof. Schönb erg, travelled from Berlin to Bonn. To attend a celebration at the Egyptian Embassy in Bonn for awarding him a decoration (Order of the Republic, 2nd class) from the Egyptian government in appreciation of his valuable contribution to the development of scientific research in Egypt).
Awarding Alexander Schönberg a decoration (Order of the Republic, 2nd class) from the Egyptian government, 1985, at Egyptian Embassy, Bonn
Heads of Chemistry Department (From his office)

Prof. A. Mustafa
1957-1967

Prof. A. Schönberg
1937-1957

Heads of Chemistry Department (From his office)