

**Gábor Fodor**

## **COUNT ÖDÖN SZÉCHENYI IN CONSTANTINOPLE (1874-1922)<sup>1</sup>**

Although Count Ödön Széchenyi's (1839–1922) work in Hungary, his role in the development of navigation and of voluntary firefighting, or that of the Funicular in Buda Castle are quite well known in our homeland, and some people perhaps know about his outstanding activity in the modernization of the Turkish firefighting, the publications only very superficially deal with his life in Constantinople, with his work realized in the Ottoman capital, or with his difficulties in his private life. These deficiencies are even more conspicuous considering that he devoted almost 50 years to the habitants of this oriental metropolis, his wife was a member of the local Greek minority, and his children's life also interlaced closely with the contemporary Ottoman elite. Hereinafter I try to present shortly Count Ödön Széchenyi's, or he is mentioned in the Turkish sources Pasha Zicsni/Szecsni, life on the bank of Bosphorus on the base of contemporary Hungarian and Turkish sources.

### **1. ÖDÖN SZÉCHENYI, THE FIREFIGHTER**

Due to the permanent danger of earthquakes, but especially after the earthquake of elemental force in 1509, wooden buildings which proved to be more resistant than rigid stone buildings, were gaining more and more ground. But the houses built on each other in a messy way in the ragged and steep streets always carried within the possibility of fires. With the increasing number of city population and with the appearance of house insurance (as one of the achievements of modernization), a strengthening demand emerged toward the professional and

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<sup>1</sup> In this way I would like to express my honest thanks to György Csorba, researcher of the Országgyűlési Hivatal, for all his generous help he gave me during the preparation of this article.

modern firefighting. Up to the 1870s so called tulumbayies fought against fires, who were voluntary people financed by local retailers using primitive pumps and hoses they carried on their shoulders. When these units appeared, the owners could not expect much good: most of the times their first job was to plunder the values from the burning house, then they tried to stop the fire's spread by demolishing the house and the neighboring buildings. It's not by chance that the insurance companies and the embassies of the major powers demanded strongly the establishment of professional firefighting from the Sultan. Sultan Abdul-Aziz „asked for the transference” of Széchenyi from Franz Joseph by the suggestion of Ferenc Zichy, the Austro-Hungarian legate who could see earlier the impressive result of the young Count's efforts in the Hungarian capital. At the same time there are several assumptions that Franz Joseph himself offered Széchenyi's services to the Turkish Sultan, feeling sorry for him because of the damages caused by the fires.<sup>2</sup>

In any case, the Count who visited Constantinople in 1871, already formulated suggestions about the necessity of structural changes, though those were submitted to the Sultan under the name of a deputy governor called Ahmet Raif, but it is evident that those were born on the base of Széchenyi's ideas.<sup>3</sup> These suggestions have been realized after decades' efforts. Count Ödön Széchenyi arrived in Constantinople on October 17, 1874, together with Alajos Follmann (1831–1906), where he even had to fight for his position with the Russian firefighters (and the Russian diplomacy). Finally, Széchenyi's well-trained unit won over the intrigues and in the short rivalry, thus he began his activity according to the previous plans for a duration of one year. Although Follmann returned home already in December of that year, according to Hungarian sources he was replaced by Ernő Bárány N. (?-?), later Commander General of

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<sup>2</sup> Kemalettin Kuzucu, *Széchenyi Paşa Ve Osmanlı İtfaiyesinin Modernleştirilmesi*. In: Türk Kültürü İncelemeleri Dergisi. 14.2006. 35. A cikk rövidített változata magyarul is olvasható a: Kemalettin Kuzucu, *Élete 48 évét az oszmánoknak és Isztambulnak áldozta egy magyar: Széchenyi Pasa*. In: *A magyarok nyomai Törökországban. Egy palotából és három városból nyomok*. Szerk.: T. Cengiz Göncü. Isztambul, 2010. 27-42. (A könyv két nyelven, törökül és magyarul jelent meg a 2010-es pécsi és isztambuli Európa Kulturális Fővárosa programok keretében).

<sup>3</sup> Cem Doğan, *İtfaiyye-i Hümayun: Osmanlı İstanbulu'nda Yangın, Modernleşme ve Kent Toplumu (1871–1921)*. Istanbul, 2019. 114-115.

Budapest, who stayed with him during four years.<sup>4</sup> But according to Ottoman sources Bárány was beside the Count already in October and participated in the first discussions together with Follmann.<sup>5</sup> Besides several necessary hoses were immediately ordered from England, but later on they ordered several times hoses from Ferenc Walser's factory in Budapest, as well as from Austrian, German and English factories, and sometimes even from Russian ones. As a matter of curiosity I would mention that beside the persons listed above, Béla Cziráky, later Sheriff of Fejér County, department leader of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Marshal also accompanied Széchenyi in 1874<sup>6</sup> (and returned home in a short time). A painter called Zoltán Ahmed Csörgy who later became a Muslim and returned to Budapest, was also with him.<sup>7</sup> It is worth to mention the name of Kálmán Beszédes who arrived in the Turkish capital for Széchenyi's request in the 1880s, who later worked as a civil firefighter, and whose name is known because of his pencil drawings of Rodosto and his articles.<sup>8</sup> It was also thanks to Széchenyi that Károly Bogisch was assigned as firefighter captain of Izmir (Smyrna) in 1886, but due to health issues he returned to his homeland within a year, where he soon died, thus he could not get a fame as the Pasha of Fire.<sup>9</sup>

According to the initial agreement, Széchenyi installed his headquarters in the barracks situated on Takszim Square in Pera district which was densely populated by Europeans, where he began to train a squadron in the beginning. The short-term plan contained the establishment of 1 battalion and 4 squadrons of 125 persons per each. The long-term goal was the training of 12 battalions with 6000 persons which was reached only by the beginning of the 1910's and after that they fought with the permanent lack of human resources due to the wars in the empire. It

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<sup>4</sup> Roncsik Jenő, *Gróf Széchenyi Ödön*. Debrecen, 1938. 231.

<sup>5</sup> Kuzucu, *Széchenyi*, i. m., 36. Most possibly this data is correct.

<sup>6</sup> Pesti Napló, 1896. szept. 13. vö. Kuzucu, *Széchenyi*, i. m., 36.

<sup>7</sup> Nemzeti Újság, 1922. máj. 30. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Lásd: Hóvári János, *Rodostói emlékek és tanulmányok. Beszédes Kálmán – Rodostó magyar képviselője*. Budapest, 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Budapesti Hírlap. 1886. dec. 27. 5

is not by chance that beside the Sultan's firefighting organization functioning in a military structure, the tulumbayi units were on service till the 1920s. The initial difficulties can be well characterized by the fact that after the fire which broke out in 1876 near the army's headquarters and which was stopped very hardly, some circles of the Porte wanted to reach Széchenyi's removal, and only Zichy Legate's determined intervention prevented it.<sup>10</sup> After one a half decade he managed to establish a fifth squadron beside the four existing ones (one of which was placed in Üszküdar), this fifth one had the task to stop fires in the villas situated on the bank of Bosphorus, He also organized a separate unit for the Sultan's palace in the 1890s.

The quick developments were impeded by the Empire's turbulent political relations. In 1876 Sultan Abdulaziz was moved from the throne by force, Sultan Abdulhamid II who took his place, immediately faced riots in the Balkans, and after it a Russian-Turkish war which had a catastrophic end. The Monarchy occupied Bosnia which caused aversion towards Austro-Hungarian citizens. This naturally had an effect on the judgement and the budget of firefighting. Beside it Széchenyi (who came from the west) was seen by many with envy and jealousy: the tulumbayies were offended because of the shortage of their income, the Turkish population looked at the western inventions and foreign experts with distrust, and Abdul Hamid who was dread of assassinations, made the firefighters' suspicious equipment through his finks' network. It also happened that after the Count's lengthy entreat a high extension ladder which could also reach the buildings' third-fourth floors, was bought. When the Sultan saw during a presentation that it could reach the third floor, he immediately ordered to burn it.<sup>11</sup> Interventions were also hindered by the fact that after a false alarm in 1887, the Sultan's personal permission was needed for starting the interventions outside the units' scope.<sup>12</sup>

In spite all of this, the slow but sure development could be experienced, thus even these interludes were not able to stop Széchenyi to increase his acknowledgement and appreciation. In 1877 he became a colonel, in 1880 a major general, in 1883 a Lieutenant General (in Turkish:

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<sup>10</sup> Magyar Polgár Kolozsvár. 1876. febr. 506.

<sup>11</sup> Roncsik, *Gróf Széchenyi Ödön*, i. m., 268-269.

<sup>12</sup> Budapesti Hírlap, 1887. aug. 28.

ferik) and in 1888 a Lieutenant General<sup>13</sup>. During his life he received the highest Ottoman decorations: the first class of Osmanije Order, the Grand Ribbon of Medzsidiye Order, the great golden and the silver Imtjaz medal, the small golden Lijakát medal, the Tahliszije medal for life saving, and the Medal for Science and Art (which he could wear after he got the permission from Hungary) <sup>14</sup>. On the other hand he was also asked to elaborate suggestions for the organization of firefighting in other cities which he prepared but his opinion was only partly considered. In 1891 his suggestion to establish ambulance station in the Turkish capital similarly to firefighting stations, was also strenuously refused. Finally, this idea was realized in 1911, with the help of Count Jenő Karátsanyi, President of the Voluntary Ambulance Association of Budapest and Aladár Kovách, Director, chief physician and royal counsellor when they opened the first ambulance station in Constantinople in the barracks situated on Takszim Square, and which was the present of the Hungarian ambulance association. <sup>15</sup> Furthermore, he marked the locations of the fire hydrants along the water pipes built at the end of the 1880s. All the acknowledgement was a result of a brave and hard work, as well a result of much suffering: according to the news he was injured in 1881, in 1892, in 1897, in 1899, in 1902 and in 1911, during firefighting, and in the meantime he had severe illnesses. Although the main part of the documents held in the Ottoman archives is related to his salary or to the complaints because of requested but not fulfilled purchases, he did not give up his mission, though he was expected to return to Hungary, and he even received a request from the Japanese Emperor about the establishment of firefighting there. <sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Beside these he was nominated as Division Leader in 1908, and Field Marshal in 1912 but I did not find any information of these in the Turkish sources. At the same time his rank of Field Marshal is on his tomb, as well as his rank of „Commander of Turkish firefighting regiments” received in 1888 with his assignment.

<sup>14</sup> Budapesti Közlöny, 1897. júl 7. 1.; 1907. nov.. 2. vö. Kuzucu, *Széchenyi*, i. m., 250.

<sup>15</sup> Budapesti Hírlap, 1911. máj 3. 13.; Debrődi Gábor, *Ambulance Station in Constantinople*. In: *Orvostörténeti Közlemények*. 230-233., No. 1-4. 2015. 179-182.

<sup>16</sup> *150 éve született Gróf Széchenyi Ödön* (Szerző nélkül). Budapest, 1989. 13.

After the Turkish constitutional revolution in 1908, Széchenyi's situation got even harder. On one hand in the turbulent wartime (Libya – 1911, Balkan-wars – 1912–13, the Great War – 1914–1918, Turkish War of Independence – 1919–1922) firefighters hardly got sources, on the other hand many firefighters had to join the army. Although in the beginning of the 1910s many Hungarian articles dealt with the news that Pasha Ödön wanted to return to Hungary, but finally he persisted in his chosen homeland. Furthermore, during the Great War he supported several Turkish-Hungarian charity actions, in their home his wife and daughter made bandages, bedclothes, caps and aprons, and they also nursed as volunteers injured Turkish soldiers in the hospitals of Taskisla and Bejlerbeji.<sup>17</sup> According to Ottoman sources which turned up in the last years Széchenyi requested a decoration for his daughter, Ilona on the base these activities which immediately approved, and she received the 2nd class of the so called Sefkat Medal in 1918, which was given by the Sultan mainly to ladies who participated in charity actions.<sup>18</sup> After the end of the war – thanks to his wife – he was one of the few of the Austro-Hungarian citizens who could stay in Constantinople occupied by the entente troops, thus he could participate personally in firefighting until the end of his life. In 1921 his dream caressed for a long time came true at last, namely the city's firefighting organization was established, although he could participate in it rather limitedly due his deteriorating health state.

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<sup>17</sup> dr. Mosony Lipót, *Konstantinápolyi hírek*. In: Alkotmány (212), 1915. aug. 1. 12. Taskisla is near to Takszik Square on the European side, while Bejlerbeji is on the Asian side.

<sup>18</sup> Sinan Çoluk, *Hem kont hem paşa... İtfaiyenin başında 48 sene Ödön Seçeni*. In: #Tarih (68.), Ocak 2020. 60-61.

## 2. ÖDÖN SZÉCHENYI, THE FATHER

Count Ödön Széchenyi's family life was not such a success story as his professional career. His first marriage already provoked resistance from his family, when he married Irma Almay (1844–1891), the daughter of a wealthy merchant, even though she was considered morganatic by his family. From this marriage three children were born: András (1865–1907), Vanda (1870–1916) and Olga (1873–1889).<sup>19</sup> From among the later neglected children András appeared several times in the newspapers because of his profligate way of life and his duels, although his father secured him a well-paying employment at the Ottoman Bank (which was saved from the fire by Pasha Ödön a few times). There he got acquainted with the daughter of the former director of the Russian steam boating company in Constantinople, whom he married in 1884, despite the disagreement of his parents.<sup>20</sup> But his marriage did not last long, due to his dissolute life Elena Korostowzoff did not endure beside him, and finally they divorced in 1899. From their marriage a boy was born called Lipót (1886–1920). He also took his daughter, Vanda beside him and he married her with the son of a sublime Iranian-Armenian family, Vahram Dadian who was a judge of the Supreme Court.<sup>21</sup> But the husband was later arrested due to his role in the Armenian national movement, and he escaped with his wife to Iran where he became a minister. He was killed during a riot in 1916, and Vanda committed suicide in their home in Tehran. During Ödön Széchenyi's move in 1874, it is said that his wife did not want to follow him to his new station which caused the deterioration of their marriage. After the death of their daughter, Olga, his wife's mental state was deteriorated and she died in 1894.

What is really interesting that before his first wife's death he had three children who were illegitimate:

- György in 1887 (he died in 1891, presumably due to an illness),

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<sup>19</sup> Ballabás Dániel, *Gróf Széchenyi Ödön különös házasságai*. (Special marriages of Count Ödön Széchenyi) In: Tamád Edit (szerk.), *Széchenyi István és Zemplén megye*. Král'ovsky Chlmec, 2011. 117.

<sup>20</sup> Fővárosi Lapok, 1886. ápr. 27. 846.

<sup>21</sup> Although the Hungarian newspapers wrote before that Count Henrik Weinckheim (1857-1908) has engaged Vanda in May 1885, in Constantinople and that the marriage would be held during the autumn. *Budapesti Hírlap*, 1885. máj. 23. 6.

- Ilona in 1888 (†1951), and in 1889 Gusztáv (†1966).<sup>22</sup>
- He married the mother of his illegitimate children Eulália Christopulos (1854–1918) of Greek origin on August 1, 1892, and later they had one more child, already a legitimate one named Bálint (1893–1954).<sup>23</sup>

Although he again had a morganatic marriage, he tried to prove during the later property lawsuits that his wife is a descendant of a sublime and noble Byzantine family, and the Orthodox Christian Eulália converted to Catholic faith according to the expectations. As it can be seen from the above data, Széchenyi lost four of his seven children and both of his wives during his life, and in the shadow of these tragedies he was almost totally left out of the heritage of the family's estates due to his morganatic marriages,

### 3. ÖDÖN SZÉCHENYI, THE PATRIOT

#### 3.1. Hungarian – Turkish relations

Although Count Ödön Széchenyi spent 48 years of his life in the Ottoman Empire, his love towards the Hungarian nation did not decrease during the years, nevertheless many times there were gossips about him in the Hungarian newspapers that he converted to Muslim faith.<sup>24</sup> (In fact he was the first person who keeping his Christian faith could gain the Pasha title and the rank of a General.)

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<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to mention that in the so called Hungarian register of Constantinople György is not mentioned (as it so in almost every source), and this true in case of Ilona, too. At the same time Andor Széchenyi is registered between 1882-1886. See data of the sources in: Csorba György, „Magyar anyakönyv”. *Forrás a konstantinápolyi magyarok történetéhez*. In: Keletkutatás, 2011. tavasz, 136.

<sup>23</sup> Ballabás, *Gróf Széchenyi*, i. m., 122. The marriage was held in the home chapel of archbishop Bonetti who was the Vatican Legate, after Eulália Christopulos converted to Catholic faith. The wife's witnesses were the Sultan's doctor, Pasha Mavrogeni (also from Greek origin) and Pasha Nedzsip, while Ödön Széchenyi's witnesses were from among the local Hungarians dr. József Révey and Imre Hamvai Kovács, the President and the Vice-President of the Konstantinápolyi Magyar Egylet (Hungarian Association of Constantinople). See: Fővárosi Lapok, 1892. aug. 1599. Contradictory information were published about the wife's origin: while some newspapers wrote about her as a descendant of a wealthy family from Izmir, in others it was written that she was the daughter of a carpenter and a laundress who was born in Tatavla district of Istanbul.

<sup>24</sup> Ellenzék, 1885. aug. 17. 737.



Right after he was employed abroad, he organized a collection for the victims of the flood in Tabán, in 1875.<sup>25</sup> In 1880 he travelled home for the unveiling of his father's, István Széchenyi's statue where reached a great acknowledgement in his Ottoman uniform.<sup>26</sup> In 1884 he was the one who accompanied the Crown Prince couple, Rudolph and Stephany, during their stay in Constantinople, fulfilling their special request. He also participated in the burial of Dániel Szilágyi (1830–1885) who was a famous bookseller, and after the opening of the Oriental railway in the reception of Hungarian tourist groups during 1887 and 1888.<sup>27</sup> He also attended the programs of the delegation which arrived with Ármin Vámbéry (1832–1913) and Vilmos Fraknói, Secretary of the Academy (1843–1927) among others in 1888.

He also had an active role in preserving the memory of the Hungarian refugees buried in Saint Benoît's Chapel, thus Krisztina Csáky got a new coffin in 1894, by Széchenyi's leadership, and he organized a memorial mass and a wreathing at Ferenc Rákóczi II's tomb on the same place in 1902.<sup>28</sup> He also helped Vámbéry when he visited the Porte in order to borrow from Abdul Hamid II such Hungarian related objects which were taken from the Hungarian Kingdom during the Turkish subjection for the Millennium celebrations. Ödön Széchenyi offered two candelabrum representing Bercsényi's Hussars owned by him for the exhibition, which were supposed to come from Ferenc Rákóczi II's „palace” in Rodosto.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> A Hon, 1875. aug. 54.

<sup>26</sup> Kuzucu, *Széchenyi*, i. m., 50-51.

<sup>27</sup> In order to present the new railway which made possible the arrival of Orient Express to Constantinople, the Hungarian Railway Company organized two journeys. In both cases the Hungarians were welcome in elegant receptions. In the second group there was Ignác Kúnos turkologist, the later director of Keleti Akadémia (Oriental Academy), and Kálmán Thaly historian, who was a decisive personality of the Rákóczi research. See.: Pesti Hírlap, 1888. okt. 4. 5.

<sup>28</sup> Budapesti Hírlap, 1894. okt. 20. 8. és 1902. máj. 30. 4.

<sup>29</sup> dr. Krizsán László, Vámbéry Ármin konstantinápolyi küldetése. In: Földrajzi Múzeumi Tanulmányok. 8. 1990. 67.

### **3.2. Hungarian cultural life**

Pasha Ödön had an active role in the local Hungarians' cultural life, too. He was elected as Honorary President of the newly formed Konstantinápolyi Magyar Egylet (Hungarian Association of Constantinople) in 1906, as he was active in it before. In the 1910s the association had a significant role in the strengthening of economic and cultural relations between the two countries by opening Hungarian language courses and sending Turkish pupils to Hungarian industrial schools.<sup>30</sup> As mentioned before, he helped injured Turkish soldiers during the Great War with his family, he supported the organization of Turkish-Hungarian aid concerts in Constantinople. Besides he also participated in the programs of the Konstantinápolyi Magyar Tudományos Intézet (Hungarian Institution of Science in Constantinople) which was founded in 1916.

### **3.3. Relations with the homeland's firefighters**

He not only had tight relations with his homeland but also with the representatives of his profession during the decades spent in Constantinople. He travelled home for the celebrations organized for the 5000<sup>th</sup> and 10000<sup>th</sup> guards of the Association of Hungarian Voluntary Firefighting (although he was late from the second because of a railway accident), and he also received frequently Hungarian firefighting delegations in the Turkish capital. From among these the most famous one was the journey organized in the summer of 1892, without any doubt, in the frame of which they celebrated the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Széchenyi's firefighting activity. In the delegation of 50 persons there were Alajos Follmann, Vice President of the firefighting association, Ernő Bárány N., General Commander, Ferenc Várady, Deacon, Imre Karácson, priest and Ferenc Walser, factory owner. In honor of the delegation a spectacular practice was organized in the barracks of Takszim Square, several receptions and garden parties were held and Várady celebrated a mass in the garden of the embassy. After the mass Széchenyi handed

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<sup>30</sup> The association was lead by Izidor Baumgarten at that time, who was the Director of Magyar Kereskedelmi Rt., beside him Géza Hegyei pianist had an active role in it. Hegyei played several times in the balls of the association, and later he had a main role in the organization of the aid concerts during the Great War both in Budapest and in Constantinople.

over a unique flag to the Hungarian comrades, the mother of the flag was Baron Calice's (Austro-Hungarian ambassador) wife. The delegation handed over as a present a fully equipped, horse-drawn firefighting carriage to the sister organization of Istanbul.<sup>31</sup> In the next two weeks the delegation participated in different programs, among these in a traditional Friday selamlık<sup>32</sup> where Baron Calice shortly presented the delegation's leaders to the Sultan, and afterwards Abdul Hamid gave different decorations to the members of Hungarian team.<sup>33</sup> Beside the reports of the Hungarian and foreign newspapers, Miklós Chriszto, firefighting commander of Gyula prepared and published a travelogue, in which he writes in a detailed way about the more significant events of the two-week long journey.<sup>34</sup> A similar visit was organized in 1899 when they celebrated the 25th anniversary of Széchenyi's Turkish commandment. According to the reports the Hungarian firefighters were represented by the commanders: Béla Novotny, Béla Rauscher, Ede Hermann and Gyula Kerschek who forwarded the greetings of Archduke Joseph and who also left the Turkish capital with the Sultan's decorations.<sup>35</sup> Széchenyi also participated in the opening of the Avenue of Hungarian Friendship in Istanbul in 1917, which happened after that today's Museum Avenue was named Sultan Mehmed's Avenue.<sup>36</sup> Finally, it is worth to mention that in the last year of the Great War. after a huge fire raging for days due to the shortage in human and material resources, for the order of Sándor Wekerle Prime Minister, Ernő Erdély, firefighting commander of Győr, Ferenc Papp, firefighting commander of Szeged

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<sup>31</sup> Fővárosi Lapok, 1892. júl. 14. 1435.

<sup>32</sup> The Sultan's public march for Friday's worship

<sup>33</sup> Fővárosi Lapok, 1892. júl. 19. 1471. Kálmán Beszédes criticized strongly the proposition about the personal audience with the Sultan and the different statements given during the preparation of the program. According to him most of them were fictive and the products of the delegation's members' fantasy. It is undeniable that neither the flag's dedication ceremony, nor the Sultan's audience happened on the way and with the participation of those, as planned previously but the leaders were presented to the Sultan. See: Beszédes Kálmán, *A magyar pasa jubileuma*. (Jubilee of the Hungarian Pasha) In: Fővárosi Lapok, 1892. júl. 19. 1467-1469.; Beszédes Kálmán, *Konstantinápolyi levél*. (Letter from Constantinople) In: Fővárosi Lapok, 1892. júl. 28. 1535-1536.

<sup>34</sup> Chriszto Miklós, *Konstantinápolyi emlékeim*. (My memories about Constantinople ) Gyula, 1893.

<sup>35</sup> Budapesti Hírlap, 1899. okt. 28. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Török-magyar kapcsolatok az Oszmán Birodalomtól napjainkig. A levéltári dokumentumok tükrében*. (Turkish-Hungarian relations from the Ottoman Empire till our days. On the base of the archive's document) Istanbul, 2016. 446-451. (The book was published in the cooperation of the Turkish and Hungarian state archives in two languages).

and László Kuharszky, Secretary of the Hungarian Firefighting Association travelled to Constantinople in order to learn the lessons of the new destruction and to make suggestions about the supplement of the equipment.<sup>37</sup> Of course, the delegation was received by Pasha Ödön who accompanied them in the Turkish capital, but due to the forthcoming collapse, the visit did not have real results.

#### **4. HIS BURIAL AND HIS MEMORY**

After his second wife's death in 1919 and due to the protracted wartime, Count Ödön Széchenyi lived a more and more solitary life, because of the political changes his relations with Hungary and the Hungarian comrades discontinued, until he closed his eyes forever on March 24, 1922, in Constantinople. His burial took place in the Georgian-Catholic Notre Dame de Lourdes Church situated in Sisli district, then in accordance with his last will, he was laid to rest in the Catholic cemetery in Feriköj district beside his dead little son, György and beside his wife.<sup>38</sup> His burial was a real Turkish-Hungarian event, at his tomb the representatives of the Hungarian colony and the pupils who earlier studied in Hungary, made speeches.<sup>39</sup> After his death notification arrived to Hungary, a requiem mass was held in the parish church of the downtown in May 1922, celebrated by Zoltán Török vicar.

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<sup>37</sup> Az Újság, 1918. aug. 4. 10.

<sup>38</sup> According to the diary of the cemetery György was laid in the family tomb later, but there is no date beside the registry, unfortunately. As Eulália's name is the first in the registry followed by György's who died at the age of four, it can be assumed that his rests were placed in the new family tomb after his mother's death. Burial Diary of Feriköj Catholic cemetery, 361. Carré St. Laurent III-IV., Tomb Nr. 164 (according to the earlier numbers 272.)

<sup>39</sup> Turán, A Turáni Társaság Folyóirata. 1922. 131. "The Turkish young men who studied in Hungary felt obligated to participate in the burial and in their name Mehmed Hadi chartered agronomist held a speech in Hungarian bidding farewell to the Hungarian aristocrat who found a second homeland at the Turkish brotherly people."

As the journalist of Pesti Hírlap, who knew the Pasha personally, noted at the end of his obituary bitter sweetly: „The son of the Greatest Hungarian died in a foreign land because he could not survive from his work in his homeland although he was a Count.”<sup>40</sup>

Ödön Széchenyi did not only have a decisive role in the establishment of the Association of Hungarian Voluntary Firefighting and of the Sultan’s firefighting teams but he was a very important conduit between the two countries. His value is very well shown in the fact that uncountable Hungarian and Turkish studies, articles and educational writings are prepared about his work in Hungary and in Turkey until the recent days.<sup>41</sup> It is also important to highlight that the Museum of Firefighting in Istanbul was named after him for a long time, and in its new place a separate corner is devoted to the Hungarian Count, as it is so in the Museum of Disaster Management in Budapest. His tomb was renovated in 2019, by the support of the tender about the preservation of Hungarian relics abroad issued by the Ministry of Foreign Economics and Foreign Affairs and was realized by the Hungarian Institution of Istanbul. In every September his tomb is wreathed by the European Side’s Firefighting Commandment of Istanbul in the presence of the Hungarian ambassador and the Consul General on the Turkish Firefighting Day. In 2020, for the initiation of the Hungarian Firefighter Association a memorial plaque also preserves the memory of the Hungarian Pasha of Fire in the Turkish capital.

Count Ödön Széchenyi had undying merits in the organization of voluntary firefighting in Hungary, and in the establishment of professional firefighting in Budapest.

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<sup>40</sup> Pesti Hírlap, 1922. ápr. 5. 6.

<sup>41</sup> It was not long ago that the book of Cem Doğan researcher *İtfaiyye-i Hümayun: Osmanlı İstanbulu’nda Yangın, Modernleşme ve Kent Toplumunu (1871-1921)* (The Sultan’s firefighting: fires, modernization and the city people in the Ottoman Istanbul) was published, which deals a lot with Széchenyi’s activity, and also the popular and colorful #Tarih (#History) which is an educational magazine, wrote about the most fresh archive’s information related to Pasha Ödön in January, 2020.

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