Huṣayn Fawzi was born in Cairo on 11 July 1900 in a small street near the Azhar university as the son of the engineer Muḥammad Fawzi, who came from a family of merchants. Like most young people in the Azhar quarter he went to the Koranic school to learn reading and writing and to obtain a basic knowledge of the Koran. For his secondary education he went to the more westernised khedival school, al-Saḥidiyya, where he met children of well established families like the Taymūrs, and became acquainted with European culture. In that period Fawzi already demonstrated a great interest in music, theatre and literature. At the age of seventeen he obtained his baccalaureate and entered the Qaṣr al-Ṣayyid Medical School. He specialized in surgical and clinical ophthalmology, served between 1923 and 1925 as a physician in a hospital in Tanta, but then realized that medicine was not his vocation. In those years he had been active in Cairene literary circles and became one of the founding members of al-madrassa al-haditha, the group of journalists and artists who started in 1925 the literary journal “for destruction and construction”: al-ṣaḥīḥ. In the review he published the stories which are the subject of this article. In that same year Fawzi succeeded in obtaining a grant for study in France where for six years he studied natural sciences, hydrobiology, pisciculture and oceanography. He proved himself an excellent violinist in student orchestras. In France he also met his future wife whom he was to marry in 1939. On his return to Egypt he became director of the Institute for Hydrobiology in Alexandria and member of an international committee for research on the Mediterranean Sea, and he participated in the famous John Murray expedition to the Indian Ocean with the research ship al-Mabūth. This experience inspired him to write his first Sindbad book Sindibād ‘Aṣṣīrī (‘A Modern Sindbad: Journeys in the Indian Ocean’, 1938). After that he obtained high positions at the new university of Alexandria and in the Ministry of Culture. Other Sindbad books followed in which he stressed the cultural affinity between Egypt and Europe, a standpoint which he defended consistently and candidly.

In Ḥadīth al-Sindibād al-qadīm (‘Tales of the Old Sindbad’, 1943), char-

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1 For the information on Fawzi’s life I am greatly indebted to Sasson Somekh who sent me his articles and to Mr John Cremers who allowed me to use information from his M.A. thesis “Een moderne Sindbad. Drie verhalen van Huṣayn Fawzi. Een vertelanalyse” St. Anthonis [University of Nijmegen] 1991. I wish to thank also Mrs. Sheila van Gelder who was kind enough to read the English text of this article and offer suggestions for improvement.
acterized by Somekh as "one of the most interesting products of modern Arabic letters"\(^2\), Fawzî presents early Arabic writings on geography and sea travel and discusses the origin of legends about strange places and oceanic facts. In the second part of his book he studies some specific maritime stories in the *Alf layla wa-layla*, especially the stories of Sindbad the Sailor, characterized by Somekh as "an insightful and detailed study, unique in its skilful orchestration of literary, psychological and oceanographic methods of inquiry"\(^3\). With this book Fawzî intended to establish the reality of spiritual values of ancient Arab culture and especially of its maritime literature.\(^4\) In *Sindibäd ilâ 'l-gharb* (‘Sindbad Travels Westward’, 1949) Fawzî offers a mixture of autobiographical writings, descriptions of travel experiences in Greece, Italy, London, Paris, and reflections on music and art. This third Sindbad book can be seen as a counterpart of the second in its stressing of the Western cultural impact. It is logical that Fawzî’s next Sindbad book should concentrate on Egypt. As a matter of fact, *Sindibäd Miṣrī: Jawlät fi rihāb al-tārikh* (‘An Egyptian Sindbad: Journeys Through History’, 1961) can be seen as an attempt to reintegrate modern Egypt in its pharaonic tradition, at a moment when Egypt was giving up its national identity for the benefit of the United Arab Republic. During his long life Fawzî published more books using the name of Sindbad. It would take too much time to discuss them all.\(^5\) But what is important for the account of his life is to mention at least the appearance of his memoirs in 1968, entitled *Sindibäd fi rihlat al-hayāh* (‘Sindbad Through his Life’s Journey’) a book that not only gives an outline of Fawzî’s public life, but also can be seen as a “testimony to the hopes and frustrations of the generation of liberal intellectuals that came of age around the time of the 1919 revolution”\(^6\) to which the members of the New School also belonged. From 1955 on Fawzî served in the Ministry of Culture in various high positions. After his retirement he continued publishing and studying other cultures until his death in August 1988.\(^7\)


\(^3\) ibid., 23.


\(^5\) To the list published by Somekh one could add at least one other Sindbad book: *Sindibäd ilâ 'l-‘alam al-jadîd* (‘Sindbad Travels to the New World’, Cairo 1984).
