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FULL ARCHIVAL REFERENCE: Universitätsarchiv, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 6-12 und 14

PERSON: Paul Koschaker

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF CONTENT: Six letters: three letters by Paul Koschaker, one by Professor Grapow, one by Professor Weigmann, and one by the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung.

PERSON VISITING ARCHIVE: Tommaso Beggio

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KNOWN REFERENCES IN LITERATURE: Brief references to the letter sent by Koschaker to the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung on 19th April 1940 in M. Müller, "Paul Koschaker (1879-1951). Zum 100. Geburtstag des Begründers der Keilschriftrechtsgeschichte", *Altorientalische Forschungen* 9 (1982), p. 280 f.; A. M. von Lösch, *Der Nackte Geist. Die juristische Fakultät der Berliner Universität im Umbruch von 1933*, Tübingen 1999, p. 264.

NOTES ON THE ARCHIVAL SOURCE:

Six letters regarding the issue of the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des alten Orients* (Institute for Ancient Near Eastern Legal history) in Berlin.

Three letters out of six were written by Paul Koschaker who sent them to Professor Koch (at the time still Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Berlin) in 1940 and in an uncertain date (but likely in 1939) and to the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung in 1940.

The three other letters have been written respectively by the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung, by Professor Grapow (the new Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy in Berlin since the summer of 1940) and by Professor Weigmann (the dean of the Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät in Berlin) in 1940.

All the letters are typewritten, except the one sent by Koschaker to Koch in 1939.

Letter written by Koschaker to the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Professor Koch (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 14).

There is no date on the letter, but Koschaker in the text refers to some activities he would have accomplished at the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des alten Orients* together with Dr. Adam Falkenstein.

Since Falkenstein left Berlin for Göttingen towards in 1939, the letter cannot have been written later than that year.

Handwritten, in German, 1 page long, sent from Winklerstr. 13, Berlin-Grunewald. The content of the letters deals with some lectures on cuneiform law Koschaker and Falkenstein would have given at the *Seminar*.

Letter written by Koschaker on 19th April 1940 to the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 11-12).

Typewritten, in German, 3 pages long (recto and verso, numbered), sent from Winklerstr. 13, Berlin-Grunewald.

This letter, written in a resolute tone, shows not only how decisive the foundation of the *Seminar* was for Koschaker, but also that he had plans to make the University of Berlin one of the main German and European centres for the study of the Ancient Near East. Since the reaction of the Ministry to this request was positive, and the university administration also decided to take part of the library from the *Seminar für orientalische Rechtsgeschichte* in Leipzig and move it to Berlin, the new institute eventually opened on 1st April 1936. Koschaker was appointed its director and a place for the *Seminar* was found at the Near Eastern section of the National Museums. The institute was connected both to the Faculty of Law and to the Faculty of Philosophy, since Koschaker wished to give an interdisciplinary imprint to this field of studies. The creation of the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des Alten Orients* was a great personal and academic achievement for Koschaker, but he also needed to have other colleagues to help him carry out his projects coming from other fields, in particular from philology and archeology. Nonetheless, as Koschaker explained in the text, a series of events took place that led him to feel himself deeply embittered.

First, Koschaker felt the need to complain about the general situation in Berlin, a situation that had forced him to abandon his goals and objectives, even his most modest ambitions at the time he had decided to move there.

Another cause for complaint was the funding of the *Seminar*. In 1936, his first year in Berlin, the institute received 500 RM from the *Kultusministerium*, whereas from 1937 onwards the fundings were reduced.100 At the time of writing, the *Seminar* received 250 RM per year. Koschaker clearly stated that this was a very small sum of money.

Then, his only assistant, Dr. Hellebrand, had been removed – by the university administration – to another occupation. This was exacerbated by the fact that no one thought it necessary to inform Koschaker of the University's decision. The third issue related to the room in which he worked and held classes at the *Seminar*: after the war had broken out, he had been moved to another office, because his previous one was now being used for air defence purposes. The new room, however, was not suitable for his work and he was not convinced that a better space could not be made available for him within the museum. The fourth and last point concerned the Chair in Assyriology at the University of Berlin. In the letter, Koschaker revealed his disappointment about the decision to move Falkenstein without having found someone to take his place in Berlin. Thus, in Berlin, a city which held one of the most impressive collections of Assyrian-Babylonian and Ancient Near Eastern monuments in the world, the Chair in Assyriology remained vacant and teaching of the subject had been abruptly interrupted.

To conclude, Koschaker explained that he could not imagine that someone at the Ministry desired to oppose or suppress the continuation of his activities at the

Seminar; nonetheless, he had been burdened with the responsibility for the Institute, since he was its director, but without the necessary means to carry out these responsibilities. For these reasons he asked the Ministry to close the *Seminar* and release him from his title of director, which would otherwise sound somewhat ironic (the last sentence sounds even blunter in German: “und mich so von einem Titel zu befreien, den ich im günstigsten Falle nur als Ironie empfinden könnte”). At the end he desired to stress, however, that he could not be considered responsible for this failure.

Letter written by Koschaker on 19th April 1940 (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 6) and sent to the Dean – until the summer of 1940 – of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Berlin.

Typewritten, in German, half a page long (not numbered), sent from Winklerstr. 13, Berlin-Grunewald.

In this brief missive, Koschaker announced that he had officially requested the closure of the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des alten Orients*. He also thanked Koch for the active and deep interest shown concerning the appointment of a new chair in Assyriology after Falkenstein had been moved to Göttingen.

In the last lines, Koschaker expressed all his bitterness to Koch, writing that the harm caused by the closure of the Institute would, in any case, be less than the anger and disappointment he had endured.

Letter written by Grapow (the new Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Berlin) to the Rektor of the University, Hoppe, on 4th November 1940 (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 7-8).

Typewritten, in German, 2 pages long (recto and verso, numbered).

Hermann Grapow complained with the Rektor of the University, Willy Hoppe, about Koschaker’s request to close the *Seminar*. Grapow wrote that he was sorry to hear that Koschaker had submitted such a request, but he also affirmed that, before any kind of decision could be taken, it was necessary to wait for the assignment of the new professor in Assyriology and for his opinion on this particular issue.

Grapow was also disappointed that Koschaker had always focused on the close connection between his *Seminar* and the Chair in Assyriology, neglecting the Chair and professors for Egyptology that worked at the University of Berlin, and seemed to ascribe the responsibility for the failure of the Institute mainly to Koschaker.

Letter written by the Reichsminister für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksbildung sent to the Rektor of the University, Hoppe, on 28th November 1940 and sent by the Rektor to the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Grapow, for his information on 3rd December 1940 (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 9).

Typewritten, in German, half a page long.

The Ministry for Science, Education and Popular Education decided not to accept Koschaker’s request to close the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des alten Orients*. On the contrary, there ought to be a discussion as proposed by Grapow involving Koschaker, Soden (the Assyriologist who should take the Chair in Berlin but had joined the German military forces) and Grapow himself. The Minister wrote that he would not agree to Koschaker’s request. In the absence of compelling reasons he was not well disposed to abolishing institutes that had been created as part of

the university. Otherwise, an impression might be given that such institutions had not been sufficiently thought through in advance.

Letter written by the Dean of the Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultät at the University of Berlin, Hans Weigmann, and sent to the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Grapow, on 9th December 1940 (UA-HU, UK Personalia K 274, Bd. II, Bl. 10).

Typewritten, in German, five-line long.

The very short missive (only five-line long) was sent by the Dean of the Law Faculty of Berlin to Grapow, to ask the latter to consult also with him with regard to the question of the *Seminar für Rechtsgeschichte des alten Orients*.