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Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Hengelmuller von Hengervar, March 1, 1910

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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Unofficial.

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March 1, 1910.

My dear Mr. Ambassador:

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your kind letter of February 21st, with its enclosure, and also of your note of yesterday.

I had not understood that you were going to suggest to the other Ambassadors the consideration of the question of possibly adopting some scheme for the ricevimentos until after Mr. Hale had had the opportunity to talk the matter over quite informally with you, but I learn that when he called he did not have the good fortune to find you.

Thinking that I may have failed to make matters quite clear when I had the pleasure of a conversation with Your Excellency the other day, it may not be out of place for me to try now to do so.

When the Ottoman Embassy inquired of the Office of His Excellency

Baron Hengelmüller von Hengervár,

etc., etc., etc.,

Ambassador of Austria-Hungary

naturally

of the Third Assistant Secretary of State how it would be proper for the Ambassador to arrange his official reception, it was not possible to give him information as to the precise practice of the Ambassadors here because the Department of State had no direct information on the subject. For this, therefore, it was naturally assumed that the Embassy would address itself to the doyen. The office of the Department which has charge of ceremonial matters felt reluctant, however, to decline to give, in answer to an academic question, at least some account of the usual practice in capitals where the protocol for such receptions is well defined. This was especially felt because Mr. Hale was, I believe, like myself, ignorant even whether Ambassadors newly arrived in Washington did always hold any sort of official reception at all. Accordingly, the office referred to informally gave the Ottoman Embassy an unofficial and unauthoritative outline based upon a study of the practice at other capitals and indicating, for convenience, what was thought to be a kind of composite outline, with indications of what might be the corresponding procedure here. The point I wish to make absolutely clear is that the Department of State never has made any official or authoritative communication or even expression of interest in the procedure regarding *rievimentos*, and that the rough outline given the Ottoman Embassy had no character except that indicated. The office consulted was,

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naturally, aware that this particular matter of protocol usually rests upon an understanding between the Ambassadors and the Foreign Office, and is not one usually determined by unilateral action.

In view of all the circumstances, including the present extreme pressure of business in the Department of State, my own opinion is that this question, which has hitherto been the subject only of tentative and informal discussion, would best be entirely dropped. Meanwhile, if at a later date either the Department of State or the Ambassadors should see fit to indicate a desire to discuss it, it should, I should suppose, be very easy to arrive at a satisfactory understanding.

I am, my dear Baron Hengelmüller,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) H. W.