

The Inauguration Ceremony of Ahmad Shawqi as Prince of Arab Poets in Cairo, 1927

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ABSTRACT

Ahmad Shawqi became a member of the Senate in 1924 and was named the 'Prince of Poets' in 1927. This was the year that the second edition of his poetry collection, *Al-Shawqiyyat*, was published. The first edition was published in 1898, and on the occasion of the issuance of the second edition, a number of ceremonies honouring the poet were held in his behalf. This pledge of allegiance constituted a national event par excellence. The ceremony was attended by King Fu'ad, Prime Minister Sa'ad Zaghloul, and a large group of Arab visitors. Bahrain participated by sending a small golden palm tree, which was donated by its emir to the Prince of Poets. The 'Princedom of Arab Poetry', began with the pledge of allegiance to Ahmad Shawqi, during a special ceremony on 29 April 1927 in the presence of a group of Arab poets. This group was led by Hafeth Ibrahim, Shawqi's competitor, to confirm that Shawqi was undoubtedly the highest poet among his peers at the time, and he has remained distinguished in the Arab consciousness to the present day, despite the rise of other good poets and many poetic movements.

INTRODUCTION

Arab literature had never bestowed anyone with the title, the Prince of Poetry, and the ancients did not use it even in the pre-Islamic era when Arab literature was in its golden age and known for its encouragement of poetry and literary circles that held poetry contests. Arab delegations from the tribes of the peninsula presented their work and boasted about it. Many literary markets became famous during that period, such as the Majna market in Makkah, Dhu al-Majaz behind Arafat, Al-Mirbad in Basra, Al-Kanasa in Kufa, and Dumat Al-Jandal. The most important and famous literary market was Okath.

Shawqi was one of the most prominent contemporary poets of the time not only in Egypt, but also throughout the Arab and Western world, as he represented a specific artistic stage in the history of modern Arabic poetry. Shawqi played an important and major role following the approach of his teacher, Mahmoud Sami Al-Baroudi, in reviving the literary movement that included a great heritage. This movement was a new beginning in the life of Arabic poetry.

Shawqi lived from 1868-1932 AD, and witnessed many events that the Arab nation and the Islamic nation underwent. These events had a great impact on his life and his poetry. In Egypt, his native country, he realised before the occupation a semi-independence and was a contemporary of the Arab revolution. He witnessed the British occupation of Egypt, and later experienced the national movement led by Mustafa Kamel and Muhammad Farid. Later, he was exiled by the British to Spain after the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, following the

ouster of Khedive Abbas. He supported the 1919 AD revolution that took place in Egypt, praised the Mujahideen, and watched the national movement from his exile, before returning in 1920.

Shawqi was also a poet of patriotism. In his poetry, he spoke of many of the events of Egypt, sang with love for it, glorified its great past and bright present, grieved for its weakness, and urged the people of Egypt to support their country. Shawqi also lived through the grave events that passed through the Islamic world, as Turkey, the Ottoman Caliphate state at that time, was descending from its heights and losing many of its states.

SHAWQI'S POETIC RANKING

Ahmad Shawqi, Hafeth Ibrahim, Khalil Mutran, Al-Zahawi, and Al-Rasafi had a serious role in the cultural, social and political Arab life. Al-Ahram newspaper, for example, used to publish Shawqi's poems on its front page, and the Arabs read them the next day in Levant, Beirut, Baghdad, Bahrain, Aden, Tunis, and Tetouan.

Shawqi dealt with most of the arts through poetry, whether it was praise, flirtation, description or lamentation; then he would fly off, dealing with political and social events in Egypt and the Islamic world. He was the first to write demonstrative poetic stories in Arabic and mastered them. Before him, individuals tried to do this, yet he surpassed them. His poetry exceeds 23,000 lines, including 17,500 of standard poetry, and more than 6,000 lines of theatrical poetry. This exceeds the number reached by any poet who has ever written in Arabic; thus, Shawqi is rightfully considered the most prolific Arabic poet of all time.

He was the prince of Arab poets in the twentieth century, and one of the most prominent poets since the era of Al-Mutanabbi. Shawqi in many aspects was compared with Al-Mutanabi, the greatest Arab poet. Yet he is the first and most prominent to write poetic plays in the Arabic language.

Shawqi was endowed with a unique poetic talent and a fluid intuition. He did not have difficulty composing poetry. The meanings were always sung to him as if it were raining. He muttered poetry while walking or sitting among his companions, present among them in person but absent from them in his thoughts. That is why he was one of the most fertile Arab poets. As a result, his poetic production reached more than 23,500 lines, a number not reached by any ancient or modern Arab poet.

Shawqi was knowledgeable in a variety of areas. He devoted himself to reading Arabic poetry during its flourishing times, accompanied its great poets and perpetuated his reading of books on language and literature.

He had a capturing memory that made it possible to memorise what he had read. It was even said that he used to memorise entire chapters from some dictionaries, and he was fond of history. This was shown in his poems, which are not devoid of historical references, that are known only to those who are deeply involved in the study of history, old and new. Shawqi had a delicate linguistic sense and a musical instinct, making him skillful in choosing the words that consisted with each other to speak the melody that aroused rapture and attracted the ears, so his poetry came with a pure wonderful melody that in Arabic was known only to a few of the

great poets. In addition to his Arabic culture, he was proficient in French, which enabled him to learn about its literature, learn from its arts and be influenced by its poets.

He composed Arabic poetry for all its purposes, including praise, lamentation, love, description and wisdom, and in this he has wonderful monuments that raise him to the pinnacle of the art. Shawqi 's poetry collection is titled *Al-Shawqiyyat*. Later, Dr Muhammad Sabri Al-Sarbouni collected the poems that were not included and made a new collection of them in two volumes titled *The Unknown Shawqiyyat*. The truth is that Shawqi had captured the attention of Egyptians with his wonderful creations and made them feel a national pride when the Prince of Poets was mentioned. He was the star of a constellation of modern poets and its undisputed prince as he filled the world with his poetry, attracted people to it and touched their hearts.

Shawqi was able to combine the ancient and the modern by giving Islamic characters to the ancient religions and highlighting the truth of monotheism that religions have advocated since ancient times. This tendency also prevailed in his theatrical poetry as well. Shawqi's historical poetry is full of names: events, people and things, and he added his images and artistic tools to accommodate his poetic phenomenon and to add a touch of Islamic sanctity. As for the literary heritage, Shawqi enriched his poetry with the poetry of heritage subsided in it. Shawqi also conducted tours on the history of Arabic literature during which he read many books and drew inspiration from them. This gave him a contact to sources of literary history, and enabled him to draw an integrated atmosphere of Arab, pre-Islamic, Islamic and Umayyad life with its social, literary, religious, political and war aspects. Thus, Shawqi inspired some of his expressive wisdom through the literary heritage, and this constituted the largest part of his poetry.

Shawqi's Titles

Al-Ahram newspaper stated in the issue dated 18 March 1893 in the preface to a poem that it was 'composed by the glorious poet and eloquent writer Ahmad Shawqi of the Khedive's high court who is now in Paris'. In the following months, *Al-Ahram* welcomed the news of Ahmad Shawqi's return from Paris, and wrote: 'Returned from Paris, the poet, author and accomplished writer, Ahmad Shawqi, after he spent many years there gaining sciences and knowledge'. This was in the issue of 25 November 1893 - and in the context of news published while Shawqi was a student in Paris, the article stated that he was elected president of a branch of the National Union of Students in Montpellier.

Shawqi was described as 'the Lord of poetry, the brother of literature, the master of eloquence, and the priest of eloquence, Ahmad Shawqi'. This was written in *Al-Taqqaddum Al-Masry* magazine on 19 March 1893.

Shawqi was called 'the creative poet, and the genius of Egypt, the poet of the prince' by *Al-Wa'eth* magazine, 'the prince of the rhetoric and the owner of the scepter' by *Al-Ahram*, 'the genius of the era' by *Al-Liwaa*, 'the prince of the state of the rhetoric' by *Al-Akhbar*, 'the great poet of the Nile' by *Al-Jarida*, and 'the genius of the poets of the era' by *Al-Mu'ayyad*. The title: 'Prince of Arab Poets', was first mentioned by *Al-Ahram*, and repeated by *Al-Ma'rifah*, *Al-Zahraa*, and *Al-Kashkul*. The title that became popular, was the 'Prince of Poets'.

Wahab, S. A. (2006). *Shawqi fi Oyoun Mu'asereh (Shawqi in the eyes of his contemporaries)*. Kuwait: The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity, page 14.

Glory Period in Shawqi's Life

Shawqi's poetry in the period preceding his exile revolved around praise. Whereas Khedive Abbas Helmy was overwhelmed with his praise and defence of him, and satirised his enemies, he did not overlook an occasion to laud praise and congratulate him, since he sat on the throne of Egypt until he was deposed from power. Shawqi's poetry collection is filled with many poems for this purpose and he stood with Khedive Abbas Helmy in his struggle against the British. Those who were loyal to them, not only resented the occupiers, but also cared and defended the benefactor of his grace, as I mentioned in my previous research 'Denshawai and Cromer in the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi'.

Al-Rifai, N. Y. 'Denshawai and Cromer in the Poetry of Ahmad Shawqi'. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, Vol. 7, no. 3, Mar. 2020, pp. 1-27, doi:10.14738/assrj.73.7891.

'Shawqi returned from his studies in France at the end of 1893, after the death of Khedive Tawfiq, to work with Abbas Helmy II. The period from 1893 to 1914 AD witnessed years of social and literary glory for Shawqi. From a social point of view, Shawqi was a prominent figure in the court of the Khedive, and he became one of those closest to him, sending him as his representative abroad, and attending his political seminars and meetings as one of his men. As a result of this rapprochement, Shawqi was apparently - expressing with satisfaction and conviction - the policy of the palace and the praise of the Khedive. Thus, Shawqi's relationship with the nation's men and political leaders was determined according to their proximity or distance from the palace'.

Muneer Sultan (1997). *Al-Badee' fe She'r Shawqi*, Alexandria, Egypt: Matba'at Sami, page 34.

The Prince's Poet Who Became the Prince of Poets

Shawqi chanted his poems in praise of the Khedive Tawfiq by virtue of his upbringing in the palace. His first poems were published in the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Waqa'i'* in his youth on 7 April 1888. After his return to Egypt and joining the translation department in the palace, he continued to change positions until he became the head of this department. He became close to Khedive Abbas Helmy and those who sat on the council, and Shawqi praised him through his poems, until he was named 'The Poet of the Prince'.

In 1927, the prominent figures of the Arab nation gathered at the Opera House to show their allegiance to Shawqi with the title 'Prince of Poets' and to celebrate the issuance of the second edition of his collection (*Al-Shawqiyyat*), and his membership in the Senate.

Al-Ahram published an article in issue 14984 published on 9 May 1926, titled 'Why Is Shawqi Called the Prince of Poets? The author of the article said, 'Nearly a quarter and a half century ago, in *Al -Ahram* magazine, two words were used to describe Shawqi and his poetry, that the writers, and the whole audience, in particular and the public, were awaiting. *Al-Ahram* said in describing the poet: 'He is the prince of poets', in describing his poetry collection (*Shawqiyyat*), which documents the fact that Dawoud Barakat was the first to give Shawqi this title.

The title that preceded the title 'Prince of Poets' was 'Poet of the Prince', which invites us to follow Shawqi's transition from the first designation to the next. Shawqi's life and creative journey were divided into two phases: the first phase before exile, i.e., from his birth in 1868

until his exile to Spain in 1914, and the second phase began with his return from exile in 1920 until his death in 1932.

Al-Ahram published a poem by Shawqi on Saturday, 18 January 1908, in which Shawqi was congratulated by His Highness the Khedive on Eid al-Adha, who said in the presentation, 'Today we publish for readers the poem of the poet of the prince and the prince of poets'.

Dawoud Barakat was proud of having been the first to give this title to Shawqi at the beginning of his journalistic career, which was confirmed by Ahmad Ubeid in his book, *Memory of the Two Poets*, in which he collected all material written about Shawqi and Hafeth. Its first edition was published in 1932, as confirmed by Abdul Mon'em Shmeis in his book: *Characters around Shawqi* in 1979.

Ubeid, A. (1933). *Dhikra al-Sha'irayn. (Memory of the Two Poets)*. Beirut, Lebanon: Alam Al-Kutub.

Shmeis, Abdel Mon'em. *Shakhsyat hawla Shawqi (Characters around Shawqi)* Iqra' series, October 1979, page 112

Shawqi's friend, the late poet, Prince Shakib Arslan, named his poetry collection *Al-Shawqiyat*. As for the one who gave Shawqi the title of Prince of Poets, he was the late Dawoud Barakat, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper. That was in the year 1899 when Shawqi was around 30 years old.

Shawqi's star shone at that time, while three currents fought for him. Boutros-Ghali wanted to lure him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Dawoud Barakat wanted to attract him to contribute to the editorship of *Al-Ahram* newspaper; and the Khedive wanted to keep him in the palace in order to receive his praising poems.

Shawqi could not escape the shackles of gold, which often forced him to remain silent about great patriotic events, for fear of angering his master. He apologised in this respect by saying:

أأخون اسماعيل في أولاده ولقد ولدت بباب إسماعيل ؟

Do I betray Ismail among his children?
While I was born at the door of Ismail?

Jawdat, Saleh. (1960). *Balabel min Al-Sharq. Al-Dar al-Qawmiyah lil- Tiba'ah wa Al-Nashr*. Cairo, Egypt, pages 75-76.

'We do not know a poet for whom necklaces of praise were formulated, as they were composed to Shawqi the Prince of Poets, as every poem of his is called a masterpiece, and every one of his compositions is considered famous. His words are the richest jewel, and his meanings are the unique essence. This is how newspapers describe him and so say the narrators of his poetry. He deserved much of this description, as he is the poet of love and courtship, the composer of incidents and history, the owner of wonderful wisdom and well-known proverbs, the interpreter of national passion and the defender of religious belief, the reviver of the study of

antiquities and the awakener of determination to great deeds, the caller for unity and harmony and the extractor of immortal facts from dreams.

He praised the royal sons of Egypt from Ismail to Tawfiq to Abbas to Hussein to Fou'ad, and he often went up from the grandchildren to the grandfathers, so he praised Sa'eed, Ibrahim and Muhammad Ali, then rather went back to ancient history turning its pages, praising the sultans of Egypt, its caliphs and its pharaohs, chanting about their feats, praising them all glowingly.

And so was his affair with the sultans of the Ottoman empire who succeeded in his reign: as he praised Abd al-Hamid, he flattered Rashad. Just as he praised Rashad, he praised Muhammad V, and just as he chanted for the greatness of the sultans and the Khaqans, he chanted for the heroes of freedom and the Ottoman constitution. Just as he sang for the sultans of Constantinople, he sang for the men of Ankara.

He served liberty because he loved it, and called for reform, because he felt the need for it, and he talked about the need to spread knowledge and honourable morals. Because he knew that this was the basis of urbanisation, and for that he served as the authority. He saw it as obligatory and necessary to achieve all of those demands.

*The weekly *Al-Seyasa* (30 April 1927) in the special issue honouring Shawqi.

Keeping Up with Major Events

Shawqi was unique as a human poet, who infiltrated humanity and permeated all the purposes of poetry. He had a glowing mind, which no poet of any era could match. His poetic tools were the best help for him in reaching the hearts and feelings of people, which carried within its music, rhythms, timbres and excitement, that ignited emotion in various fields. Shawqi was the poet of the Arab renaissance, the poet of Islam, the poet of patriotism, the poet of descriptive arts, the poet of love and songs, etc., and his production included all fields of poetry.

'One of the characteristics of Shawqi is that his genius has many aspects. He is in his poetry a historian, an Egyptian patriot, an Arab, a Muslim, a philosopher, a wise man, a funny person, a social reformer, a poet, a painter, a novelist, and a lyricist. I do not know an Arab poet in whose poetry [encompasses] all these aspects met as by the unique Shawqi'.

Khorshid, Muhammad (1933). *The Prince of Poets, Shawqi, between emotion and history*. Bait Al-Maqdis printing press, Jerusalem, page 14.

Shawqi was in his time, like a recorder of the events of history. His days and the various literary seminars in capitals were the greatest aid to the spread of his work. When a newspaper or a literary magazine published a poem for him in an issue, people flocked to it, and it became the subject of gatherings and social pleasure of the men of literature and a material for commenting, memorising and discussing. The literary symposiums were a sufficient means to disseminate his poetry among the people on the tongues of those attending these symposiums, in a way that does not underestimate the inadequacy of the means of publishing.

'Shawqi had an amazing talent for ease of composition, and he always proved that he was able to compose long poems with an epic spirit according to the events of the hour. He was also able

to compose short clips or poems with a lively and joyful view. There is a good section in *Al-Shawqiyyat* consisting of special occasion poems that resulted from the events of the hour. In this sense, we can classify very general poems that are very diverse, whether in terms of content or in terms of form, such as praises, elegies, and accurate daily life events. These genres deserve to be called 'occasion poems. Poems of praise and elegies were almost always an excuse for Shawqi to address religious, political and social issues.

Al-Muqdad, M. (translator) (2006). 'Al-Elham wa fan Al-She'r enda Ameer Al-Shu'ara Ahmad Shawqi', Kuwait: The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity. Original book: Boudot-Lamotte, A. (1977). Ahmad Shawqi: L'homme et l'oeuvre. France: Institut Francais de Damas, page 106.

Shawqi's great empathy resulted in concern for everything that occurred in world events that affected his compassionate and sensitive soul. He was like a page on which every trace of an accident, and every consequence of a natural event or human action anywhere in his world was imprinted. When a calamity befell, he thoroughly studied it as the honest historian, the wise contemplator, and the true poet. As a poet, he set himself up to chronicle the great events, for he would go back to the past through the ages and read history and the values left on the people of that era. Shawqi was not Egypt's poet alone; rather, he was a great poet whose wide heart beat with a love for humanity, wherever he found an image to be. Therefore, you would not find him discriminating between nations. He was the poet of the Arab, the poet of the East, the poet of the Muslims and all religions.

'In dozens of poems, Shawqi's patriotism and his love for Egypt were represented in the greatest rhetoric way, provided that this blazing patriotism in his chest did not make him forget the East or what he owed towards the East, so he did not let an opportunity escape without expressing his sympathy for the East and admiration for its bygone glory, and this shows in Shawqi's poetry. Shawqi is not only the poet of Egypt, but the poet of the East as a whole. In fact, Shawqi's poetics do not reach their height except when Shawqi thinks about the East and what has become of it after that ample glory and great prestige '.

The editor. *Al-Hilal* Issue 1 - November 1, 1932. *The bereavement of Arabic literature in the prince of poets*, page 23.

In his attitude, Shawqi was much like human radar, drawing on his imagination to see everything that occurs at any part of the earth in terms of calamities or events. He took pride in an invention or discovery that merited pride, and presented his expressive poetry that sparked feelings to these events.

'What he composed was the path of the breeze on every tongue. His poems, which were published by one of the newspapers, were grabbed by the hands, and became the talk of society and the subject of its discussions, and this is something that the British occupation used to make a thousand accounts for.'

Ul-Majeed, A.A. (1998). *Shawqi Al-Insaan*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo, Egypt, page 26.

The world did not experience any events involving nature, war or social disasters, without Shawqi poeticising it, calling on the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, governments and peoples to extend a helping hand to the miserable who were afflicted by such ordeals. This emotional participation for the injured stemmed only from a heart filled with love for universal humanity, which does not differentiate between religions, genders, or tongues.

Shawqi admired the message of the Red Crescent and the Red Cross. The symbols of humanity resounded in his poetry, carrying mercy and care. He said:

(جبريل) أنت هدى السماء وأنت برهان العناية
أبسط جناحيك للذين هما الطهارة والهداية
وزد (الهِلال) من الكرامة و(الصليب) من الرعاية
فهما لربك راية والحرب للشيطان راية
لم يخلق الرحمن أكبر منهما في البراية

(Gabriel) You are the guidance of the heavens and the proof of guardianship,
Spread your two wings, which are purity and guidance,
And increase (the crescent) with dignity and (the cross) with care,
They are a banner of your Lord, while war is a banner of Satan
God Most Merciful did not create a sign greater than them in righteousness.

'Kamel Al-Shennawy said, 'I lived with Shawqi while he composed his poem on Gandhi, and this poem did not take more than two hours of Shawqi's time. The great mister, Tawfiq Diab, the owner of the *Al-Jihad* newspaper called him, and told him that the newspaper had prepared a bouquet of roses to present to the great leader as he was passing by Egypt on his way to London on the ship Rajputan. Shawqi said he was now composing a tribute poem to Gandhi, so Tawfiq Diab said he was pleased to send Shawqi's poem to Gandhi with the bouquet of roses. Two hours later, Shawqi finished his poem'.

Wahab, S.A. (1967). *Shawqi in the eyes of his contemporaries*. Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al-Hilal, page 232.

Shawqi saluted Gandhi in his fight for the independence of his country, since Gandhi saluted Egypt in its fight against colonialism:

سلام النيل يا غاندي، وهذا الزهر من عندي
وإجلال من الأهرام والكرنك والبردى
سلام حالب الشاة ، سلام غازل البرد
ومن صد عن الملح ، ولم يقبل على الشهد
ومن يركب ساقيه ، من الهند إلى السند
سلام كلما صليت ، عرياناً وفي اللبد
وفي زاوية السجن ، وفي سلسلة القيد

Salute of the Nile, O Gandhi, and these flowers are from me,
with reverence from the pyramids, Karnak and papyrus,
a salute to the sheep milker, the papyrus weaver,
who turned away from salt, and did not accept the honey,
who went on his legs, from India to Sind,

A salute whenever you pray, naked or in the wool,
in the corner of the prison, and in the chain of constraint.

In the twenties, a violent earthquake occurred in Tokyo. Once Shawqi, the human poet, heard of this and was briefed by the enormity of the catastrophe, he initiated a long poem about the calamity, which he began by saying:

قف (بطوكير) وطف على (بوكوهاما) *** وسل القريتين أين القيامة
خُيِّفَتْ بِالمَسَاكِينِ الأرضُ خَسْفًا *** وَطَوَى أَهْلُهَا بِسَاطِ الإِقَامَةِ

Stop (in Tokyo) and move around (Pokohama), then ask the two villages where is the resurrection?

The earth completely collapsed by the dwellings,
And its people folded the rug of residence.

On the occasion of the seventeenth anniversary of the death of the late Mustafa Kamel Pasha, the leader of the National Party, he composed a poem in which he dealt with what afflicted the country in 1924 in terms of division, bickering, and partisanship. He referred to the statement of 28 February, which included the four reservations that restricted the country's independence. He also dealt with the position of some leaders. Then he mentioned what the country needed and advised the use of means of reform and the rejection of disagreement.

'In dozens of poems, Shawqi's patriotism and his love for Egypt were represented in the greatest rhetorical way, provided that this blazing patriotism in his chest did not make him forget the East or what he owed towards the East, so he did not let an opportunity escape without expressing his sympathy for the East and admiration for its bygone glory, and this is pervasive in Shawqi's poetry. Shawqi is not only the poet of Egypt, but the poet of the East as a whole. In fact, Shawqi's poetry does not reach its height except when Shawqi thinks about the East and what has become of it after that ample glory and great prestige'.

The editor. *Al-Hilal*, Issue 1, 1 November 1932. *The bereavement of Arabic literature in the Prince of Poets*, page 23.

Shawqi did not have any occasion in which he did not write his poetry. He was not satisfied with lamentation and praise as was the custom of ancient Arab poets. Rather, he tried to compose for every incident and every emergent issue, whether related to the East or the West. In the first part of his poetry collection there is a poem he composed on the occasion of postponing the coronation of King Edward VII of England due to a boil; another poem was in memory of Carnarvon, the discoverer of the tomb of Tutankhamun, and a third celebrating Amin Al-Rayhani for his delegation to Egypt. Shawqi wrote an appeal to Sa'ad Zaghloul, then Minister of Education, to establish a school in Al-Matariyya, a poem for the sake of the Red Crescent, one on the occasion of the reform in Al-Azhar, and another in celebration of Ahmad Hassanein after his return from his trip to the Libyan desert. He wrote in celebration of the founding of the Press Syndicate as well as the establishment of the Banque of Egypt, and so on.

In the second part, there is a poem acknowledging the occasion of the arrival of pilots from Paris to Egypt in the year 1914, a second on Shakespeare, a third on the occasion of Hafeth Awad's

book about Egypt, a fourth on the Hagia Sophia Mosque, a fifth on Bologna Forest, and a sixth on the Ottoman woman. Other poems in this section include a description of Geneva and its environs, the Place de la Concorde, a photographer's visit to Egypt, and the Paris flower exhibition, among others.

The third part is about lamentations, but in the fourth part, there is a poem about the inauguration of the facilities of the Egyptian University, another about the celebration of laying the first stone for the Bank Foundation, and another about the opening of a house for the bank. Other poems involved the opening of another house and the birth of Prince Muhammad Abdel Moneim as well as a poem dedicated to him. Shawqi wrote of the fire of Mit Ghamr, a sermon by Wilhelm II, the German Kaiser, that caused an international crisis, the opening ceremony of the Oriental Music Club, and the welcoming of Wilhelm II to the tomb of Salah al-Din.

'Shawqi mixed with the Egyptians in clubs, cafes, restaurants, and horse houses, and walked with them in the streets of Cairo, browsing their faces and souls in the way he browses the clothes displayed in the windows of shops and stores. All of this helped to change the poet's artistic life, as he was no longer devoted to the palace or his aristocratic life, but rather became to a large extent, a participant to the Egyptian people, speaking in many of its political and economic affairs, and he was chosen as a member of its Senate. His wealth during that period allowed him bliss and contentment in his life, and he lived in luxury between Cairo and Alexandria, or, frequenting amusement parks and playgrounds, and travelling to Paris or to Lebanon and Syria, not failing to obtain the pleasures of life'.

Daif, S. (2010). *Shawqi Poet of the Modern Time*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo, Egypt, page 278.

As for the Denshawai massacre, I have referred to Shawqi's poems about it in my previous detailed research on that incident and its consequences (See 'Denshawai and Cromer in the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi').

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SHAWQI'S POETIC LANGUAGE

Shawqi is considered one of Al-Baroudi's students and one of those who were influenced by his conservative poetic school, which was characterised by elegance of style and precision of compositions. His poetry is devoid of tautology and strangeness, and most of his poems are characterised by aesthetics and splendor, as if his poetry were distinguished by wonderful music. His poetry was also distinguished by the integrity of the language and the correctness of the words. Perhaps this is due to his authentic Arab culture, as well as his Islamic culture, and his memorisation of the Noble Qur'an.

'Dr Shawqi Dhaif described Ahmad Shawqi's poems as being like built palaces, and that he excelled in depictions and imagination, as his imagination is wide and fertile'.

Daif, S. (2010). *Shawqi Poet of the Modern Time*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo, Egypt, page 44.

'The greatness of Shawqi is attributed to the mastery of the meaning more than its attribution to the mastery of the pronunciation; then the meanings of the poet multiply, amplify and magnify if two things meet for him: the. The first of these is his wide knowledge and familiarity with many sciences, arts, characteristics of religions, the history of peoples, their myths and their heroes. And the second of these is the burning in his heart and the sincerity of his tendencies that his innate instincts push him towards'.

Ubeid, A. (1933). *Dhikra al-Sha'irayn*. Beirut, Lebanon: Alam Al-Kutub, page 321.

Shawqi's Arab and Western culture allowed him to familiarise himself with many forms of literature, whether Arab or Western, so he became acquainted with the great poets and intellectuals through their books and works. Shawqi tried all poetic topics, such as praise, lamentation, love, description, wisdom and others.

Human poetry, in everything that Shawqi, the human poet, composed flowed like a stream, or a river, delighting the listener and arousing his admiration for what was included in his compositions on every occasion for which he wrote. He brought life into things that he described as if they were living creatures that feel and suffer. Wherever you look into his poetry, you find a scene, a story, or a dialogue which spreads human aspects full of love, goodness and striving for perfection.

The Music in His Poetry

Shawqi had a delicate linguistic sense and a skillful musical instinct in choosing the words that connected with each other to send a melody that aroused rapture and attracted the ears. In addition to his Arabic culture, he was proficient in French, which enabled him to learn about its literature and arts.

The key to the miraculousness of Shawqi's poetry was its unique music that stemmed from the delicate sense and refined nature of his compositions. Hence the most characteristic feature of Shawqi's poetry is its charming tunefulness. It could be said that if he were not a poet, he might have been a musician, for he was by nature a cheerful soul and had a musical ear. Therefore, it is not surprising that he charmed the entire Arab world with his melodies.

Shawqi's poetry is distinguished by its special music, which the recipient identifies in terms of wording and composition as well as in meter and rhyme .The beginnings of his poems are sumptuous and resonant, in addition to a delicate linguistic sense. Daif said about Shawqi:

'I am not exaggerating when I say that when I listen to a long poem by Shawqi I feel as if I am really listening to a symphony, and I do not doubt that this is due to his skillful control of the instruments of his words and their vocal vibrations. The issue is not only a matter of cleverness or skill, but it goes further. It is brilliance, inspiration and a genius sense of the vocal structure of poetry'.

Daif added: This splendor in music is coupled with a sweetness and dexterity that is unknown in our time to anyone but Shawqi'.

Daif, S. (2010). *Shawqi Poet of the Modern Time*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo, Egypt, page 44.

‘It was from the effect of his grace and the echo of luxury that Shawqi molded songs out of his poetry, which rejoice the hearts, shake the hearings, fascinate the minds, and delight the souls. He recited from the guitar of his poetry melodies that were songs, and surrounded the people in the praises of sublime art and chaste portrayal’.

Hamouda, A. *Ne'ma wa Herman, Al-Kitab Journal*, Cairo. October 1947.

The Innovation in His Poetry

Ahmad Shawqi led the movement to renew Arabic poetry in the last quarter of the nineteenth century until the 1930s. Before him, Sami Al-Baroudi had restored the spirit to Arabic poetry after long years of inactivity. Shawqi followed him to renew, innovate and fill the world with eloquent poetic images closer to musical compositions, until great poets pledged allegiance to him. Egypt and the Arab world willingly accepted him as the Prince of Poets.

Shawqi was the leader of the new (classical) school, and he was one of the indicators of the literary renaissance in the Arab world, without a doubt. Taha Hussein describes the transformation that overturned Shawqi's poetic strategy after his Spanish exile, saying that he underwent a sturdy transformation later, for which you hardly knew a counterpart among other poets who preceded him in our Arabic literature. Shawqi was freed from the restriction of political conditions and explored himself, and he was a poet created to renew.

‘It is not surprising that Shawqi surpassed the poets of his time and those before them after the fourth century with his abundance of innovative meaning. We hardly read a poem of his that does not include one or more of his innovative or wonderfully generated meanings, so that the sum of it consists of a treasure added to the wealth of literature, thus increasing its abundance and empowerment’.

Ubeid, A. (1933). *Dhikra al-Sha'irayn*. Beirut, Lebanon: Alam Al-Kutub, page 322.

‘Shawqi invented the saying in an innovation in great topics that no Arab poet had touched upon before him, including his wonderful poem in glorifying the pyramid. Then there is his poem, which he composed in 1914 when two pilots came from Paris to Egypt, in which he described the plane in marvelous verses. These are some of its lines:

مركب لو سلف الدهر به	كان احدى معجزات القدماء
نصفه طير ونصف بشر	يا لها احدى اعاجيب القضاء
كبساط الريح في القدرة او	هدهد السير في صدق البلاء
حمل الفولاذ ريشا وجرى	في عنانين له نار وماء
ارسلته الارض عنها خبرا	طن في اذان سكان السماء

A boat, if it preceded the ages,
were one of the miracles of the ancients.

Half of it is a bird and half a human being.
What a marvelous predestination.

Like a wind rug in capability,

or a hoopoe guide in the sincerity of hardship.

Carrying the steel like feathers,
running in two reins with fire and water.

The earth sent it as its news,
It resonated in the ears of the inhabitants of the sky.

'Did you see, O reader, how far Shawqi's imagination flew? I think that he was more capable of flying than planes, and knew better than them the paths of the skies. This poem was one of Shawqi's innovative topics, not alone to show but there are other poems to show this'.

Al-Muqtataf magazine. 1 January 1931, pages 113-114, Maktabat Al-Muqtataf, She'rShawqi (Name of article), commenting on his poetry collection.

Shawqi's Additions to Arabic Poetry

'First: he opened the door for Arabic poetry to poetic theater, after it was mostly lyrical. Even if the critics said that this theatrical genre did not mature, and his theatrical poetry remained lyrical, the fact remains, that dozens of poetic plays written after Shawqi passed through "that golden gate"'.
Second: He pushed the poetry of wisdom on the tongue of animals and birds with a strong impulse, which affected the Arab taste, and brought up its taste for generation after generation.
Third: He singled out the children for a collection of light and pleasant poetry, which combined the educational message with fine art, in which there was simplicity, attractiveness, and dynamism, and it contained everything needed for the life of youth.
Fourth: He treasured the Arab library with a huge book of prose and poetry in history and wisdom, revealing a vast culture and a deep survey of life.
Fifth: He created a series of songs in the Egyptian language that were enhanced by sweet melodies and sounds, so people enjoyed them in all parts of the Arab world, and achieved a linguistic goal in bringing the vernacular and the eloquence closer together.

In a concluding statement, I say: Shawqi re-expressed the traditions of his nation's poetic heritage with the brightest expression, just as he expressed the concerns of its present and the longings of its future, with the most beautiful statements. He himself was aware that he was the poet of the people and the poet of the age when he said:

كان شعري الغناء في فرح الشرق
وكان العزاء في أحزانه

My poetry was the singing in the wedding of the East,
And the consolation in its sorrows.'

Al-Rubaie, Mahmoud. *Ahmed Shawqi, Prince of Neoclassicism*, *Al-Arabi* Issue 647, October 2012, Special File.

'Shawqi's experience was wider in the field of poetry theater, and he was the first to pioneer leading this innovative movement in Arabic poetry, able to accommodate the method of contemporary poetic style away from the lyric single voice. He, in his seven plays, proved his sincerity in the propensity to innovation, and was a pioneer of this kind of innovation in Arabic poetry.'

Al-Muqaleh, A. *Amaliqa anda Matla' al-Qarn*. (Giants at the turn of the century). Dar Al-Adaab, Beirut, Lebanon, page 42.

'Fluency in expression, novelty in meaning and a good choice of words with innovation in meanings. Shawqi may take an old meaning and dress it in a new guise of words that will make you rejoice at him because he reaches your inner self in a new way. This is a quality that you cannot find in anyone other than Shawqi, and only Shawqi masters it. It is rare to find in the collection of his poems a repeated idea, even in two different poems. He is absolutely innovative, and there is no doubt that his knowledge of French literature has given him an advantage over other poets'.

Editor. *'The bereavement of Arabic literature in Ahmad Shawqi, Prince of Poets'*. *Al-Hilal* magazine, Number 1, November 1932. Cairo, Egypt, page 24.

What Has Been Said about Shawqi

Shawqi came after the Egyptian poet Mahmoud Sami Al-Baroudi (1839-1904 AD), carrying the torch of renewal at the borders of the kingdom of contemporary Arabic poetry. He expressed his own experiences and the experiences of his time, paving the way for new Arab poets, who contributed effectively to the development of Arabic poetry. Ahmad Shawqi lived through an important period of the development of the Islamic world, so he positively integrated into it, and tried to express his national concerns in a purely Islamic framework.

'Shawqi composed his message in Arabic poetry in the best possible manner, and it was the ideal that the Arab Poetry Board had aspired to for centuries. He was not a rigid or frozen example, yet he enriched Arabic poetry with images that restored its ancient shining.

Shawqi's works were neither shallow nor superficial in meaning, but he was able, with the good polishing and quality of casting he was given, to cast a glow on the familiar meanings, filling them with strength and radiance. His thoughtful phrases, with a good choice of pronunciation and coherence of weaving, were able to harmonise with his meanings and ideas to finally gather from them a precious stacked necklace.

Shawqi was one of the rare few who was generous in giving of his time and did so frequently. Therefore, all schools were exposed to his poetry, and he is still the pioneer of Arabic poetry in the modern era'.

Abatha, Aziz. *Shawqi, the poet whom Arab poetry has aspired to for centuries*. *Al-Masriya Journal*, Issue 144, December 1968.

‘Shawqi is the most brilliant poet in the history of our modern Arabic literature due to the multiplicity of his artistic aspects and the diversity of his literary works’.

Daif, Sh. (2010) 12th ed. *Shawqi Poet of the Modern Time*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo, Egypt, page 5.

‘The basics of Shawqi's poetry are of four origins, a rich and fertile nature, a broad culture, a wide imagination, a comprehensive passion, and an extraordinary poetic genius’.

Al-Fakhouri, H. (1986). *Al-Jame' fi Tarikh Al-Adab Al-Arabi*. Dar Al-Jeel. Beirut. Lebanon, page 436.

‘Shawqi's poetry is distinguished by the strength of the rhetoric, the splendor of poetic music, the broadness of the horizon, and the depth in absorbing historical events, old and modern. He rivaled the great late poets and advanced them in many ways’.

Al-Rafi'ie, A.A. (1992). *Shu'ara' Al-Waṭāniyah fi Miṣr*. Dar Al-Ma'aref, Cairo, Egypt, page 45.

‘There is no dispute that His Excellency, Ahmad Shawqi, is the master of the point of poetry in our time, as he came up with brilliant miracles and clear evidence; therefore, he is truly the Prince of Poets and the bearer of the badge of orators’.

Al-Rafe'ie, Tawfeeq. 1st Ed. (1923). *Karmat Ibn Hani*. Al-Matba'ah Al-Rahmaniya. Cairo, Egypt, page 3.

‘The fact that does not need much proof is that Shawqi's poetry is a peak that other peaks cannot reach, and it is not out of nothing that he was commanded over poets, even if the royal palace or other factors played a role in that. Shawqi's poetry is evident in its diversity between lyrical and dramatic, and his poetry ranges between Islamic poetry and national poetry. Shawqi was the poet of sublime beauty, and he was one of the eagles of Arabic poetry, soaring in distant spaces where only he can reach’.

Al-Mousa. Khalil (2006). *Shawqi and innovation-the Shawqi and Lamartine Session*, page 447. Dawoud Barakat (1868-1933), a Lebanese journalist and politician who lived in Egypt and worked as editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper said:

‘The incident that occurred in the morning, yet the evening did not come until it was broadcast among the public by a poem of Shawqi, because the incidents had a strong impact on him, shaking his nerves, exciting himself and stimulating his imagination. Most of what was composed of his poetry was while he was walking, standing, or sitting with his companions, while his mind and thought were absent from them. Rarely did he sit at his desk to think or squeeze his mind, and if he sat at the desk, it was to write down what he had composed and kept in his memory. Between one cigarette and another he found his idea and between one word and another he found the appropriate situation for the structure of the idea, and he was very careful in choosing his words as much as he chose his meanings, because he was a political poet in all his poems and in all his poetic phases.

Barakat, D. (1933). *Dhikra al-Sha'irayn* (In Memory of the Two Poets), Damascus, Syria: Al-Maktaba Al-Arabia, page 370.

'Shawqi is the leader of the new classical school, and he is doubtlessly one of the flags of the literary renaissance in the Arab world'.

Tlass, Mustafa (1985). *Poet and Poem*, Dar Tlass Publishing, Damascus, Syria. page 468.
'Shawqi is a poet the likes of whom have not appeared in a thousand years.

Jabri, Shafiq 1997, '*Dirasah on Shawqi*' Dar Qutaybah, Damascus, Syria, page 9.

'The writer Al-Manfalouti, when he translated the numbered poets and writers of the era, judged Shawqi to take precedence in the field of poetry'.

Arslan, Shakib. (200? _) *Shawqi, a friendship of forty years*. Maktabat Al-Salaf. Riyad, Saudi Arabia, page 50.

On the uniqueness of Shawqi, Ahmad Al-Zayyat, the owner of *Al-Risala Journal*, said: 'Critics almost unanimously agree that Shawqi was a fair compensation for ten centuries of Arab history after Al-Mutanabbi, in which no talented poet appeared who connected what was interrupted from the inspiration of poetry and renewed what was lost in the approach of literature'.

Abdul Aziz Al-Bishri said: 'Shawqi struck in every intention and toured in every purpose and opposed the stallions of the advanced poets.

Al-Zayyat, A.H. (19--) *Tarikh Al-Adab Al-Arabi* (History of Arabic literature). Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiya. Cairo, Egypt, page 472.

Commenting on Shawqi's poem about Damascus, the Syrian writer, Muheb Al-Deen Al-Khatib, said:

'O Shawqi! May the deaf hear you, and may your words be the angel's horn'. page 170.

And on page 501, he said: 'Shawqi is the poet of portrayal whom time refrained from granting of his kind a thousand years ago'.

Al-Khatib, M. (2011). *Al-Hadeeqa*. Al-Maktaba Al-Salafiya. Cairo, Egypt.

'Shawqi was in his time, standing as a recorder of the events of history and through the days. Due to the soundness, music and the delicacy of words, Shawqi's poetry, the memories received it with the least effort and the fastest time. It was sufficient for a newspaper or a literary magazine to publish a poem by him on an issue, so that people flocked to it, and it would be the subject of gatherings and the pleased themes of people of politeness, and material for commenting, memorising and discussing. The literary symposiums were a sufficient means to spread his poetry among the people on the tongues of those attending these symposiums, in a way that does not underestimate the inadequacy of the means of publishing'.

Ul-Majeed, A.A. (1998). *Shawqi Al-Insaan*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo. Egypt, page 36.

What Other Writers Have Said about Shawqi

‘The most famous Arab poet in the present era, and the most capable of creative perceptions and high poetic fantasies’

Mustafa Lutfi Al-Manfaluti

‘His poetry is elegant in meter, gentle in rhyme. His thoughts obey his tongue, and his eloquence is captivated by his fingertips, as if he were taking poetry from his sleeve for the ease of reaching it’.

Hafeth Ibrahim

‘Shawqi is the Nile's nightingale and its grid singer. He is one of those poets whom time is meant to give; only one like him is given birth in a generation’.

Izz Al-Deen Saleh

‘Shawqi is the interpreter and trumpet of this generation, and he is a vase from which nature sends its lungs, and from which humanity emits its sighs’.

Al-Bayan Journal

‘He composes poetry while he is among his companions, so he is with them and not with them, and he composes in the vehicle, on the railway, in the official society, whenever he wants and wherever he wants’.

Khalil Mutran

‘Shawqi was a poet who was sufficient to promote a poem attributed to him, so that it spread quickly in forums by the tongues of all writers’.

Muhye Al-Deen Rida

Obeid, A. (1922). *Mashaheer Sho'ara Al-Asr*, Al-Maktaba Al-Arabiya, Damascus, Syria, pages 65-66.

THE PRINCE OF POETS

After returning home, Shawqi became the poet of the nation who expressed the country's problems and did not miss a national event without sharing it through his poetry. The nation answered him with appreciation and granted him a high status. Poets pledged allegiance to him in the Princedom of Poetry in 1927 at a ceremony held at the Egyptian Opera House in Cairo on the occasion of his selection as a member of the Senate and his reprinting of his complete poetry collection *Al-Shawqiyyat*.

‘When he returned from exile, a ceremony was held for Shawqi at the Opera House, and the Arab poets decided to pledge allegiance to him in the princedom of poetry. That was on 29 April 1927, when Hafeth Ibrahim recited a great poem, preceded by singing at that ceremony. The guests were among the great Arab poets. And when Hafeth finished reciting his poem, the great writer and literary journalist, the late Mr Fikri Abatha, stood up to recite Shawqi's poem on his behalf. The poem, as it will become clear from its verses, is an example of humility that only applies to every great person, and he returns all that God bestowed upon him from the blessing of God's will, not to his effort and his uniqueness’.

Ul-Majeed, A.A. (1998). *Shawqi Al-Insaan*. Dar Ul-Ma'aref: Cairo. Egypt, page 11.

Shawqi became the poet of the nation expressing its issues. He did not miss a national occasion without participating in it with his poetry. The nation met him with appreciation and placed him in a high position. Shawqi, with his various purposes, reached a prominent position among poets, eventually being called the 'Prince of Poets' by his peers, as a result of his strong, sober poetry, and its great lofty goals. In the year 1927, a party was held at the Egyptian Opera House on the occasion of his selection as a member of the Senate, and his reprinting of his poetry collection *Al-Shawqiyyat*. The ceremony was attended by delegations of writers and poets from the Arab world, such as: Hafeth Ibrahim, Khalil Mutran, Shibli Mallat and Amin Nakhla. On that day, Hafeth Ibrahim announced in their name his allegiance to the principedom of poetry.

'In the year 1927, a party was held in honour of Shawqi, which was attended by delegations of poets from the Arab countries. It was one of the most pleasant seasons, and participation was one Egyptian pound, so I willingly paid the pound in honour of the Prince of Poets. The party was at the Royal Opera House'.

Mubarak, Z. (1988). *Ahmad Shawqi*. Dar Al-Jeel, Beirut, Lebanon, page 311.

In the year 1927, a festival was held in Egypt to honour the great poet, Ahmad Shawqi. In this festival, poets and writers pledged allegiance to Shawqi and awarded him the title of Prince of Poets. The festival of honour included the delegations of the entire Arab East, and this festival lasted for seven days. The poets of Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and other poets of the Arab East composed poems glorifying and praising Shawqi on 29 April 1927.

'We can look at the great honorary ceremony that was held at the Opera House in Cairo in 1927 that was attended by delegations from the Arab countries, in which Shawqi was sworn allegiance to the principedom of poetry as an announcement and documentation of what was held in general by the poets in the entire Arab nation'.

Wahab, S. A. (2006). *Shawqi fi Oyoun Mu'asereh (Shawqi in the eyes of his contemporaries)*. Kuwait: The Foundation of Abdulaziz Saud Al-Babtain's Prize for Poetic Creativity, page 12.

'It was in late October 1926 when a group of intellectuals met in Dar Al-Rabita Al-Sharqiya, (The Eastern League House), and decided to form a committee under the name The General Committee for Honouring Shawqi. This group included Taha Hussein, Ahmad Amin, Mahjoub Thabet, Miss May Ziyadah, Faris Nimr, Abdel Aziz Al-Bishri, Ahmed Hafeth Awad, Antoine Al-Jamiyel and others. Out of it emerged an executive committee that issued an appeal to the people of the entire Arab world, setting 29 April 1927 as the date for the celebration, which would last for a whole week. In its appeal, it requested the papers that would be presented at the festival. A few days after this call, the committee received news of the formation of official and popular delegations among the sons of the Arab countries and their writers from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain, Aden and Lahj (in Yemen), the Diaspora and Western countries. The Al-Tahtheeb Forum in Baghdad decided to hold a party in honour of Shawqi on the same day he would be celebrated in Cairo, and to send the words delivered to the General Honouring Committee. The Belgian orientalist decided to send the writer Vandenberg as a

deputy for the poets of his country. Then a committee of women's associations was formed to represent women in the festival'.

Gifts continued to arrive, expressing gratitude and appreciation for Shawqi's artistic talents. The Emir of Bahrain sent a palm tree of gold and its harvest of pearls; the Women's Union sent a gold cup; the Arab Club in Aden presented a gold pen; and the Arab Club in Bombay presented a silver box with a silver frame inside it around one of his poems. Yet, the most wonderful and significant of all of the gifts was a letter of honour from the Syrian fighters marked with the blood of heroes.

On 15 February 1927, a financial committee was formed, another organisational, a third for welcoming, and a fourth committee to study the research and poems and to choose which compositions would be recited by them at the festival. Sa'ad Zaghloul accepted the honorary presidency of the ceremony while the actual president was Ahmad Shafiq. The university director, Ahmad Lutfi Al-Sayed, agreed to erect a bronze statue of Shawqi, which would be unveiled at the festival.

The opening day arrived, and the delegations gathered at the Opera House and the music resounded, and it was a great day of celebration. Professor Al-Jedili, as a representative of Sa'd Zaghloul, who was ill and unable to attend, delivered his speech and saluted the delegations who came expressing the closest fraternal ties to honour the great poet, and wished the festival success. He was followed by Ahmad Shafiq, the head of the ceremony, who delivered a speech in which he said, 'Peace be upon you, O nation of Arabs, and peace be upon you, O protectors of literature. Here you have come together from different countries to honour Shawqi, or to put it more correctly, to honour the genius in the person of a man among you who returns to your language with all the virtues he has achieved and returns to your people all the glory that has been achieved.

And this is Shawqi, great from the day he appeared (here the speaker unveiled the statue of Shawqi) a genius from the day he started, and for you his flexible voice resounded with the most precious poetry and the most elegant speech; and for you he renewed the Arabic language and its wide scope of eloquence and literature; and for you he elevated it to a generous ascension among the languages of the world.

Shawqi placed Egypt in a position of literary leadership over all Arab countries, which is what the rising Egypt rejoices in and for which it extends its thanks and honour to its son Shawqi. Our knowledge of Shawqi's status in the entire Arab world, from Morocco in the West to Bahrain and Mesopotamia in the East, prompted us to seize this opportunity to make his honouring an Arab literary conference, whose days are festivals of knowledge and literature'.

Then Hafeth came forward to Shawqi, who was sitting close to him, and extended his pledge of allegiance to him, so Shawqi embraced him. The audience were moved by the situation, and fell silent for a while, but soon roused, and the hall erupted in cheers and applause. When the cheers fell silent, tears were welling up in Shawqi's eyes, as he pushed his poem towards Muhammad Tawfiq Diab to read:

مرحبًا بالربيع في ريعانه وبأنواره وطيب زمانه

‘Welcome to spring in its prime,
its lights, and its good time’

Shawqi's shyness prevented him from boasting about the emirate of poetry. He was very humble, as he felt that he had no merit in what he said because he was like a singer whom God had given a beautiful voice. He realised that Hafeth and other great poets had admitted that from that day, they had become his subjects, so he honoured their ranks, saying:

شرفت مصر بالشموس من الشرق، نجوم البيان من أعيانه

‘Egypt was honoured with suns from the east,
rhetoric stars among notables’

Celebrations continued in the following days in the Azbakeya Theater, in Al-Jazeera Casino, and elsewhere. The famous Abdel-Wahhab and Umm Kulthum sang, and research and poems continued.

Fahmi, M.H. (1969). *Ahmad Shawqi*. Dar Al-Katib Al-Arabi. Cairo, Egypt, pages 158-165.

The events concluded with a ceremony at Shawqi's house and a letter was handed to Shawqi from the leaders of the Syrian revolution at that time, written with their blood on the battlefield, and signed by all the heroes of the revolution.

The celebration took place in the old Egyptian Opera House before it was burned down, on the evening of 9 May 1927 when delegations from all Arab countries gathered inside the Opera House, and the Egyptian masses gathered around the house/ The situation quickly turned into a national wedding, in which all Arabs scattered their flowers, participating in laying the crown of the Principedom of Arabic poetry on Shawqi's head, in a wonderful national wedding.

Shawqi aptly ascended the throne of the principedom of poetry despite the large number of envious people who began to create discord between him and his competitive companion Hafeth Ibrahim, after the latter won the title of ‘The Poet of the Nile’. However, their attempts failed, and Hafeth Ibrahim himself stood pledging allegiance with a wonderful poem.

SHAWQI'S TRIBUTE PARTY

First Day Honours

(Excerpts from the Arab League Journal, 9 May 1927)

There is no doubt that the honouring ceremonies that were held in Egypt for His Excellency Ahmad Shawqi, the Prince of Poets of this era, were a great manifestation of the bond and trust between the Arab countries, which began to feel the urgent need for this natural connection that many units call for, the most important of which is the unity of language, customs and morals. There is no doubt that Cairo, which is the city of joy, splendor and beauty, witnessed in these concerts a great festival for several days, allocated especially in honour of a great genius of the East for whom time was short.

It is worthy of Egypt, as His Eminence Sayyid Haj Amin al-Husseini said in his inaugural speech at the Geographical Society House on 30 April. This was preceded by the publication of the *Al-Seyassah* newspaper, with its distinguished geographical, economic, scientific and literary writings, and the hopes it heralded for its present renaissance and the great men in it. It assumed leadership in the Arab East and took all care to strengthen these affairs among the Arab countries and to develop these lofty emotions; thus, Egypt would benefit greatly in the present and future.

Speeches

Sa'ad Pasha's Speech:

The great leader of Egypt, the man of the state, Sa'ad Pasha Zaghloul, has a unique position. not only in Egypt, but in all the Arab cities whose people view him as the best example of true leadership, reverence and veneration. Professor Al-Jedili read the speech commissioned by His Excellency Saad Pasha. He ended his speech by saying, 'I hope for this meeting every success, hoping that it will be a good way to strengthen the bonds of friendship and brotherhood between the people of the honourable Arabic language in all the Eastern countries and cities'.

Ahmad Shafiq Pasha's Speech:

He was the head of the Celebration Committee and a member of the Eastern League Association, as if the long years that whitened his hair had not yet rejuvenated his soul. He recited his speech in an audible voice, gently and slowly, in which he explained the reasons that led him and his companions to hold these honorary ceremonies, and mentioned Shawqi's stature and genius. He then concluded his speech by opening the conference in the name of God and in the name of the Arabic language.

Ahmad Hafeth Awad's Speech:

Awad was the Secretary General of the Committee and a writer for Kawkab Al-Sharq newspaper with good reviews, using the name 'Toto'. He had a good reputation in the world of journalism in Egypt. He read his letter and mentioned something about the genius and mastermind of the celebrated. Among what he said in his speech was, 'Shawqi is an illustrious great poet among the immortal ranks of the great men and geniuses of the world's poets from the dawn of history until today. He marked this era by his imagination and genius. The national aspect of holding honouring ceremonies for him stems from the fact that he helped with his rare brilliance and unique genius in raising Egypt's status and position in the Arab world, East and West.'

Muhammad Kurd Ali's Speech:

The President of the Scientific Academy in Damascus and the representative from the Syrian state, spoke with a loud voice, good diction, and clear eloquence that reflected great knowledge. At the beginning of his speech, he saluted Egypt in the name of the Levant. Next, he saluted the Egyptian genius in the person of Shawqi, and after that he touched on describing the impact of poetry on souls. He elaborated on the description of the Prince of Poets and the necessity to honour him.

Shibli Mellat's Speech:

The representative of the poets of Lebanon and the delegate to the honouring ceremony, the tall, brown-haired man, recited his poem of which he was proud. A well-arranged poem, close to the listeners' perceptions, was received with frequent applause. He opened it by mentioning

the days of boyhood and the features of Lebanon, and then he referred to the days of Muhammad Ali Pasha, the founder of the Alawite family, Prince Bashir al-Shihabi, and the renaissance of present-day Egypt. Then he praised the days of the Pharaohs and their monuments in Egypt, and mentioned the current Syrian revolution. Mellat then mentioned the past glory of the Arabs and the necessity of preserving the Arabic language and renewing its youth, ending his poem with praise for the celebrated Ahmad Shawqi.

Sami Al-Shawa:

There was a break in the ceremonies, during which time the great violinist, Sami Al-Shawa, played a musical composition titled 'Poetry's greeting'. He captured the hearts and feelings of the audience, as they admired him greatly.

Khalil Mutran's Speech:

The affable, humble, and dignified poet of the two countries was greeted with applause and recited a unique and eloquent poem, bringing together hearts in unison and harmony.

مَا السَّحَرُ إِلَّا شِعْرُ أَحْمَدَ مَالِكاً
مِنْهَا الْقِيَادَ بِلُطْفِ الْإِسْتِهْوَاءِ

Magic is but the poetry of Ahmad, the owner,
Of its leading with gentle appeal.

On the second day of honouring Shawqi, Mutran read the translation of the speech of Professor Van Rumbold, representative of the Belgian poets, in which he said, 'The present era, despite all its atrocities, has inspired major musical themes, which were included by our genius poet'.

Mrs Ihsan Ahmad's Speech:

It required great fortitude for a young woman to stand tall among a large crowd of people and deliver a speech about the necessity of honouring Shawqi on behalf of the Committee of the Women's Union Association. As for the speech, it was interesting, and the pronunciation was very clear; she did not hesitate nor stammer. In her speech, she stated, 'Shawqi, is a towering beacon whose rays of literature and wisdom crossed the Egyptian borders to the eastern Arab countries and spread in a path like a breeze'. For this reason, no sect could unilaterally honour him, rather entire nations spoke on his behalf. Those nations sent their delegations to this conference to take part in honouring him, and to prove that Shawqi was not granted to Egypt alone, but rather he was sent with his abundant poetry to all speakers of Arabic.

Hafeth Ibrahim's Speech:

Then came the great, tall and dark poet of the Nile, whose facial contours were not very pleasing. He stood on the stage with the pose of a comedian, and heartedly recited his long poem. He rotated around the theater, coming and going and making gestures that made the bereaved laugh. Indeed, the festival was serious from its beginning, and it required some levity. Hafeth's recitation of his poem provided this needed humour, and when the listeners approved of a line and applauded, asking him to repeat it, he would first refuse once and then humble himself again and protest a third time. The crowd's shouting and clamor rose, so that he had no other choice but to forcibly repeat the verse. This continued until the end of the poem when he addressed Shawqi:

تمتلك ظلال واوقات وأنعم *** ولين وعيش في مصيف ومربع
ومن كان في بيت الملوك ثراؤه *** ينشأ على النعمى و يمرح ويرتع

You own shades, time and boons,
An easy life, a chalet and a resort.

Whoever rested in the House of Kings,
grows up on bliss and has fun and enjoyment.

The giggles and laughter of the audience erupted from everywhere. Then he continued his chant until he reached his saying:

أمير القوافي قد أتيت مبايعاً *** وهذي وفود الشرق قد بايعت معي

O Prince of Rhymes to whom I came to pledge allegiance,
And these delegations from the East have pledged allegiance with me.

So Shawqi asked him to come nearer to him, extending his hand to him to take his oath of allegiance. Then Hafeth extended his hand to him to pledge allegiance, and each of them imprinted a kiss of brotherhood and affection on the other's cheek. Thus, Hafeth acknowledged the principedom to Shawqi, thus ending the dialogue and controversy between Shawqi's supporters and Hafeth's supporters, each of whom were claiming superiority over his opponent in the realm of eloquence and rhetoric.

The Prince of Poets' Poem

The celebration concluded with a poem by the Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, which the eloquent Mr Tawfiq Diab, recited with good diction. And whenever he read a line of it, the listeners clapped loudly. Here are some lines of what Shawqi wrote:

لست أنسى بدأ الأخوان صدقٍ *** منحوني جزاء ما لم أعانه
أنما اظهروا يد الله عندي *** واذا عوا الجميل من أحسانه
ما الرحيق الذي يذوقون من كر *** مي وإن عشت طائفاً بدنانه
كان شعري الغناء في فرح الشر *** ق وكان العزاء في أحزانه

I do not forget the hand of the brother's sincerity,
Who gave me a reward for what I did not do?

They but showed the hand of God to me,
And broadcast the beauty of his benevolence.

The nectar that they taste is not from my vine,
Although I lived wandering in its sect.

My poetry was the singing in the east's joy,
And it was the solace in its sorrows.

Al-Husseini, Mouneef. *Arab League Journal*. 9 May 1927 - Issue 31 - pages 1-3.

Mrs Ihsan Ahmed delivered a speech at the opera party on behalf of the Women's Union. This was a reconciliation of the organising committee, which did not overlook the role of Egyptian women, who rose to the spotlight with the 1919 revolution, in which they contributed alongside men. Hoda Shaarawi had announced the establishment of the Women's Union in 1923, and the union continued to play a rising role, which was the embodiment of the achievements of Egyptian women, stressing that they had come a long way to claim their rights. It was natural for women to be invited to the celebration in 1927, and it seems that Hoda Shaarawi was unable to attend for one reason or another, so Ihsan Ahmed replaced her. She began her speech by saying: 'In the name of the Feminist Union Society, rather than in the name of the rising Egyptian woman, we participate in this party in honour of the Prince of the East Poets the Arab is motivated by various factors, the first of which is our feeling that geniuses should be appreciated. Secondly, we offer gratitude to a supporter for whom women are proud of his support.

In her speech, Ihsan Ahmed explained the rising role of Egyptian women, and revealed the reasons for her choice to deliver the speech, which she accepted happily, especially when she recalled the bond of friendship that brought together Ahmad Shawqi's father and her grandfather, Sheikh Ali Al-Laithi, confirming this with Shawqi's poetry in his poetry collection. Ihsan Ahmed concluded her speech by saying that if the majority of great men were not recognised for their genius and glorified for their merit until after they left this world, and that it was a matter of pride for us that we have appreciated Shawqi during his life, and it was only right that we should have recognised his merit years ago. Fahim Qandil followed Ihsan Ahmed's speech with a new anthem written by Ahmed Shawqi for the Egyptian girl, and the well-known boy Abdel Wahhab sang it at the Azbakia Garden concert. This was the introductory hymn:

يا فتاة ارفعي العلم * وانشريه على الأمم
أجلسيه على السهى * وعلى قمة الهرم
* تجمع السيف والقلم وأعدّي له يدا
أنت في الملك نصفه * لو تخلّيت لانهدم

Hey girl, raise the flag and spread it to the nations
Sit him in the evening or on top of the pyramid
And prepare for him a hand that combines the sword and the pen
You are in the kingdom, half of it, if you give up, it will collapse

Asfour, Jaber. *Okath Ahmad Shawqi. Al-Arabi* magazine Issue No. 547 - 6/2004. Ministry of Information, Kuwait.

Program of the Prince of Poets Festival in 1927

In late April 1927, Cairo was flooded with delegations from Arab countries to attend ceremonies honouring the Prince of Poets.

The official party started at the Royal Opera House under the auspices of (His Majesty Fu'ad I, King of Egypt), on Friday, 29 April 1927.

The program was as follows: (Titles preserved)

1. Speech of His Excellency the Honourable President Sa'ad Zaghloul Pasha.
2. Speech by His Excellency Ahmad Shafiq Pasha.
3. The speech of Mr Ahmed Hafeth Awad.
4. The poem of the honourable Mr Shibli Mallat.
5. A musical composition: 'Tribute to Poetry' by Mr Sami Al-Shawa.
6. The poem of the honourable poet of two countries, Mr Khalil Mutran.
7. The Women's Committee's speech recited by Mrs Ihsan Ahmad Al-Qousi.
8. The poem of the great poet of the Nile, Hafeth Ibrahim.
9. The poem of the Prince of Poets.

On the evening of the same day, a party was held at the Azbakiya Garden Teatro, in which the honourable Mr Muhammad al-Shirbiny, Director of East Jordan Publications, recited a poem. The concert program on Saturday, 30 April 1927, at the Geographical Society House (titles preserved).

1. The poem of His Excellency Prince Shakib Arslan. (from Lebanon)
2. The article of the great Mr Is'aaf Al-Nashashibi. (from Palestine)
3. The poem of the great Tripolitan poet, Mr Abdul Hamid Al-Rafi'i. (from Lebanon)
4. The article of Mr Al-Jalil Muhammad bin Ahmad Dawood. (from Morocco).
5. The poem of the honourable Prince Saleh Sa'ad Salem. (from South Yemen)
6. The article of the respected Professor Vandenberg on behalf of the Belgian poets.
7. The poem of the great Mr Badr Al-Din Al-Naasani. (from Aleppo, Syria)
8. The poem of Mr Wadie Al-Bustani. (from Lebanon)
9. Research by the great Mr Al-Maqdisi. (from Lebanon)
10. The poem of the great Mr Qaiser Ibrahim Al-Ma'louf. (a Lebanese diaspora poet)
11. A poem of the great professor Anis Al-Maqdisi.
12. A poem of Bahrain.

And in the evening of the same day, there was a frolicking party and dinner at the Al-Jazeera Casino, in which the distinguished misters Fikri Abatha, Hafeth Awad and Khalil Mutran spoke. On Sunday, the first of May in the afternoon, was a Nile excursion to Al-Qanatir Al-Khairiya, in which the poem of Mr Muhammad bin Hashem (on the departure) and the poem of Mr Halim Damous (on the return) were recited.

Concert program on Monday, 2 May 1927 in the Political Economy Hall

1. A speech by the rabbi of the Israeli community.
2. An article by Mr Muhammad Amin Wasef.
3. An article by Mr Ibrahim Jalal Al-Qadi.
4. A poem of Mr Mahmoud Muhammad Ghoneim.
5. A speech by Mr Waheeb Doss.
6. A speech by the virtuous Mr Murad Farag.
7. A poem by Mr Khalil As'ad Dagher.
8. A poem by Mr Mustafa Hassan Al-Bahnasawy.
9. A poem by Mr Abdullah Abdul Rahman.
10. A poem by Mr Abdul Latif Al-Maghribi.
11. A poem by Mr Najeeb Hawawini.

In the evening another party was held at the Oriental Music House, in which a poem by Mr Mahmoud Abu Al-Wafa was recited.

The concerts then continued until 6 May 1927

These are some of the gifts that were presented to Ahmad Shawqi, the Prince of Poets.

1. A palm tree made of pure gold, with pearls hanging from it. (A gift from the Emir of Bahrain).
2. The Women's Union Gold Cup
3. A gold pen from Al-Arabi Club in Aden
4. A silver box with a silver frame inside it around one of Shawqi's poems, from the Arab Club of Bombay.

All of these items are still preserved with others in the house of the deceased which was turned into a museum.

Abu al-Izz, A.A. (1932). *Ithna Ashar Aman fi Suhbat Amir al-Shu'ara*, (Twelve years in the company of the Prince of Poets). Al-Maktaba Al-Tijariya. Cairo, Egypt. (Pages 40-43).

Celebration of Shawqi and Anthologies of What Was Said

The ceremonies honouring Shawqi continued for an entire week (from 29 April to 6 May) and were more like a general Arab conference attended by delegations from Arab countries with speeches and poems recited by its members who carried precious gifts, such as a palm tree made of gold on an amber base hanging from it. Pearls were sent by the inhabitants of Bahrain, and a gold-encrusted pen was sent by the writers of Bombay. The opening ceremony was the opera concert at five o'clock on Friday, 29 April, attended by a large audience of scholars, writers, ministers, MPs, and journalists. His Majesty the King sent a special delegate, His Excellency Ahmad Hassanein, His Majesty's First Secretary. Ahmed Shafiq Pasha, Chairman of the Honouring Committee, delivered a speech. Then Mrs Ihsan Ahmad, representative of the Egyptian Women's Union, Mr Muhammad Kurd Ali, the representative of Damascus, and Is'aaf Al-Nashashibi, the representative of Palestine spoke. Next, Shibli Mallat, the delegate of Lebanon, Khalil Mutran, and Hafiz Ibrahim, read their poems. The ceremony concluded with a poem of the celebrant. Concerts were provided in sequence at the Geographical Society House, the Economic Society Chamber, the Egyptian University, the Higher Teachers School, the Oriental Music Club House, the Azbakiya Park Teatro, the Eastern League House, the Jazeera Saray Casino and Karma Ibn Hani, which is the house of the celebrated poet in Giza. All included recitations of valuable scholarly or literary treatises and poems in which their authors commended Shawqi.

Al-Muqtataf magazine, June 1927.

SHAWQI'S WORKS

The works of Ahmad Shawqi totalled 14, some of which were poetry, some prose, and some drama:

In poetry:

Al-Shawqiyyat is a huge collection of poetry. Its first edition was printed by Al-Mu'ayad Press in 1890 in one volume. It included the Shawqi's poems from the nineteenth century, and was introduced by his autobiography. Later printings introduced the great writer Dr Muhammad Hussein Haikal (1888-1956). The *Shawqiyyat* consists of four volumes. The first volume included politics, history and sociology, and the second volume included three chapters. The first chapter deals with descriptions, and the second chapter deals with courtship. The last chapter includes various descriptions, social event and events. The third volume deals with elegies, and the fourth volume includes clippings from newspapers and the rest of the publications. The poem 'Nahj al-Burda', was also presented with an interpretation by the great imam, Sheikh Saleem al-Bishry, in a separate book.

The *Unknown Shawqiyyat*, collected and studied by Dr Muhammad Sabri, include poems and articles by the Prince of Poets. They remained scattered here and there until Dr Muhammad collected them. It includes more than 130 poems and thousands of scattered verses in about sixty articles.

'Arab countries and the greats of Islam' a prolonged poem on the history of Islam

In prose:

Shawqi wrote prose at the beginning of his literary life. Between 1904 and 1905, he wrote a novel titled *The Virgin of India*, which was serialised in *Al-Ahram* newspaper. He also wrote four other stories during that period, namely *Del and Teman*, (The Last of the Pharaohs), The Myrtle Leaves, Ladias and The Devil of Pentaur.

The Gold Markets is a collection of social articles collected in 1932 on various topics, such as freedom, homeland, the Suez Canal, the pyramids and death. They were appended with a range of lessons that Shawqi drew from his personal life.

In drama:

Shawqi wrote his poetic plays in the last years of his life, namely five tragedies: *The Death of Cleopatra* and *Cambyzes*, one from Arab history *Majnoun Layla*, and another from ancient Arab history *Antarah*, and another from Egyptian and Ottoman history, *Ali Bey Al-Kabir*. He also wrote a prose play, *Princess of Andalusia*, and two comedies, *Lady Huda* and *The Miser*.

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