



Shawqi's Friends, Opponents and Contemporaries

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ABSTRACT

This research sheds light on Shawqi's friends, acquaintances and opponents. As the Islamic tradition says, a man follows the religion of his friend, so look at whom he likes. In contemporary history, friendships between writers decreased and feelings of envy, hatred and competition for glory, fame and influence prevailed among them. This is what we see through the tense relations between great Egyptian writers, such as Taha Hussein, Al-Aqqad and Mustafa Al-Sadiq Al-Rafi'i in the 1930s and 1940s. The conflicts between Arab poets were intense, even if they belonged to the same movement. In contrast, there were writers who had beautiful friendships, lofty goals and literary ambitions, as were the friendships of Ahmed Shawqi. Shawqi had few friends yet many acquaintances. He selected his friends in the same way as a skilled jeweler would select exquisite gems to complete his creation and expensive handicraft masterpiece. He did not feel comfortable except in the company of a limited number of lighthearted people with sublime taste. Among those close to him were Mohammed Al-Babily, Dr Mahjoub Thabet and Sheikh Tamarah, who was imam of the Egyptian embassy in Washington at the time, as well as Hussein Shirin, Mohamed Jaziri and a few others, including professors Ahmad Rami and Muhammad Abdul-Wahab [1 (p. 117)].

Keywords: Ahmad Shawqi, Arabic poetry, comparative literature.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps poetry has been distinguished from the rest of the arts by the fact that its beauty is diverse in form, difficult to clearly analyse and difficult to penetrate in a way that is readily available in the other arts. Striving to demonstrate the beauty and humanity of Shawqi's writing does not require effort, but the difficult aspect is that you cannot calm the pulse of your senses due to the abundance of this beauty. The poet Shawqi, whose insight penetrates the veils, dives into the depths of events to reveal their causes and connects their appearance and information, not leaving a stray or incoming point without adding to it some poetry that uncovers it as a garment of dazzling pearls and delicate edges, unique in meaning and structure. Indeed, the poetry of special occasions, for which critics disparage its authors for adhering to, is not devoid of wit, elegance, brightness and amusement that uproots anxiety and arouses joy and sociability.

A poet of the stature of Ahmed Shawqi must be, both in life and after death, the focus of study and research, criticism and admiration. He was, in life and creativity, a target for the studies of critics and researchers and a popular topic for university studies at the master's and doctoral levels and beyond. Such studies have gone beyond the Arab scope to a foreign range, and many research papers and university theses have been written about him, advancing his work to the

modern era and even to his predecessor, Abu Al-Tayeb, who has filled the world and engrossed the thoughts of people.

SHAWQI'S BIOGRAPHY

Hussein Shawqi, the poet's son, mentioned that when his father died in 1932, he was 62, but no one paid attention to this date, which was lost in a flurry of events. However, Dr Ahmad Al-Houfy, took note of this date and verified his correct date of birth. In fact, the poet's birth certificate, which his son, Hussein Shawqi, has, indicates that the poet was born in 1870. Some researchers have seen this document, including my friend Lutfullah Ayoub, who is researching his plays [2, (p.9)].

Ahmad Shawqi was not only born at Khedive Ismail's door, but also in the arms of the royal family, who educated him and raised him during various stages of his youth. As a child, he moved from the Al-Mubtadian Primary School in Cairo to preparatory school and to secondary school, which he finished at the age of fifteen. At that time he enrolled in a law school that had opened a special department for translation in which students could graduate after two years. The palace advised him to join this department in order to prepare for work in the translation department in the palace. Ahmad Shawqi obediently accepted the advice and actually worked as an employee in the translation department in the palace for one year. Then the Khedive sent this young man to France on a mission during which he studied law at the University of Montpellier for two years. Subsequently, he moved to Paris to complete his studies at university and to become acquainted with French literature and French civilization. Thus, the palace continued to care for him and take him under its wing until he completed his cultural upbringing and formed his principles [3 (p. 41)].

Shawqi had a unique upbringing. He was born into a well-to-do home to a father who worked with the Sultan in Istanbul or in the Khedive's palace when he returned to Egypt. His mother died when he was young. When his father was away in Istanbul, his maternal grandmother took care of him. His grandmother (Temzar) belonged to Ibrahim Pasha, the governor of Egypt. Temzar was from the Morea Peninsula, a target for raiders who made kidnapping beautiful boys and girls a profession from which they made a living by selling their captives at the highest prices. Shawqi's grandmother was the property of the governor Ibrahim Pasha, with whom she did not stay for long, only until he freed her when she was ten years old and took her on as one of his daughters. Even when she married and gave birth, she would frequent Ismail's palace, taking her grandchild Ahmad Shawqi with her.

The little boy had been afflicted with an illness that left his eyes constantly twitching and always looking upward, which prompted Khedive Ismail to ask his grandmother about this strange matter. She replied that he was born like this, so he said, 'I have medicine for him'. Then he scattered golden pounds on the carpet, and the child threw himself on the ground following the gleam of gold. He collected what he could gather in his small palm, and his gaze lowered and he looked for a short period with a normal stare, but his twitch quickly returned.

The Khedive asked his grandmother, 'Did you see how I was able to heal some of what ailed the child? The grandmother responded, 'And where do we get this medicine, my lord, on a permanent basis?' He answered, 'Bring him to this pharmacy of mine - and he pointed to his pocket - and this is his medicine, and I will have it with me whenever he comes [1 (pp. 14-15)].

After Shawqi obtained a license from the translation school, the Khedive appointed his father, Tawfiq, as an inspector in the Khedive's office. Subsequently, Ahmad Shawqi himself was appointed to that position, and he spent this period of his life as a follower of the Khedive, receiving praises for his poetry, which was admired by the Khedive. He was also admired for his intelligence, which brought him closer to the Khedive, who offered him the opportunity to travel to France. Shawqi was happy with the offer and in 1887, he travelled to the University of Montpellier. Shawqi remembered these days fondly, and saw in the mission that the Khedive had designated him for the blessing that filled his eyes with the charms of art and civilization derived from the Renaissance of Europe. He developed and filled his mind with the masterpieces of French literature, and revived his poetic talent through the poetry he read of La Fontaine, Hugo, Lamertine and others. He also became acquainted with Western plays that had a great influence on his theatrical staging, and among those plays he read the works of Cournay, Racine, Molière, De Musset and others.

Shawqi also met the poet Verlaine in a café he used to frequent in the city of Paris. There he also met the Lebanese writer and poet Shakib Arslan, and a literary and human friendship was strengthened between them. Shakib Arslan liked Shawqi's poetry and wished for him to collect his poems in a collection he called *Al Shawqiyyat*. Shawqi followed this advice [4 (pp. 48-49)]. After the death of Khedive Tawfiq, the Khedive's court was led by Abbas Hilmi II, who turned away from Shawqi, because he thought that he was more in need of a politician than a poet, and he could not work for him in his strong struggle with the English colonialists. However, his thoughts quickly turned from negative to positive by friends of the poet, namely, Mustafa Kamel (1874-1908), founder of the National Party in Egypt, Bishara Taqla (1852-1901) and Boutros Ghali (1846-1910), the first of the founders of Al-Ahram and the second highest ranked of the official Egyptian figures. These people were able to succeed in bringing the poet closer to the prince, and the latter treated him with kindness, as his predecessors had done and made him a poet of the court. Given his intelligence and cleverness, Shawqi was able to gain his admiration and trust, and was selected to represent Egypt at the Orientalists' Conference held in Geneva in 1894. During these travels, he toured the capitals of Europe and gained extensive knowledge and information. Shawqi kept these deeds in mind and protected his benefactor, when the conflict between him and the English intensified. He stood by him, denouncing his colonial enemies [4 (p.59)].

Khedive Abbas was forced to move to Turkey to seek hospitalization following an illness that befell him. Loyalty motivated Shawqi and his family to move to the Turkish capital so that he could stay by his side. Meanwhile, World War I broke out, so the Khedive insisted on Shawqi's return to Egypt. The poet had barely set foot on Egyptian ground in 1915 when he was surprised to learn of the dismissal of Khedive Abbas by the English, who accused him of having contacts with the Turks. They replaced him with Sultan Hussein Kamel who did not favour Shawqi, and England was keen to remove the poet from the court and exile him from Egypt [4 (p. 61)].

Following his return from exile, he became closer to his homeland, felt the issues and suffering of the Egyptian people and wrote his most beautiful poems that still live in the Arab conscience to this day. He defended the issues of his homeland, Egypt, against the English occupation, until he died in 1932.

After his return from exile, Shawqi wrote many political poems; a poem in the February 28 project to grant Egypt its independence and many other poems in the founding of the Bank of Egypt, the Egyptian University, the Oriental Music Institute and the Red Crescent concerts. He would not leave a national event or an Arab revolution without organizing. It contains poems that arouse patriotic enthusiasm.

Ahmad Shawqi, the Prince of Poets, lived a prosperous and broad life. He was afforded an abundant livelihood and possessed a lively, motivated nature that always pushed him to transfer and move between newspaper houses, the Salt Café and movie theatres in the evening. His house was always full of visitors and prominent people and media figures from different parts of the world, and his table was always prepared to receive writers and men of letters. As for the major events in his life, there are four events that he discusses in his book: his trip to France to receive an education in 1887, his exile to Spain during the First World War in 1915, his return from exile in 1920 and the great festival honoring him in 1927. With the exception of these four major events, Shawqi's life until his death in 1932 was a pleasant one, which he divided between his home in Matareya, his palace in Giza, his summer home in Alexandria and trips to Istanbul and Lebanon [5].

Shawqi's Character

Ahmad Shawqi was a man of great depth, broad ambition, wide horizons, great resourcefulness, cultural abundance, beautiful premises, pleasant disposition and brilliant imagination. He filled the world and engaged people during his life and after his death. He was the companion of the Khedive, Abbas Hilmi II, and his friends, poets and admirers.

Shawqi was the Prince of Poets, a master wherever he went. Despite this aura of greatness that descended upon him, and the encompassing of his poetry in every section of art, there was no one in his generation or of his time who was further from arrogance nor closer to humility than he was. Even his companions felt, regardless of their stature, that they were equals and that it was a favour from God that He bestows upon whomever He wishes.

The effect of this psychological greatness resulted in brilliant descriptions of wording and meaning of everything he saw. In addition to his pride in his homeland, he had a strong love and passion for art, whether drawn, carved, engraved, read or heard in singing or chanting. He was tasked with learning the subtleties of all these art forms, which helped him delve into the depths of what he saw and described.

Shawqi's humanity permeated everything he saw or cherished. It was as if laser rays had been installed in his sight and revealed the deepest penetrations of what was hidden under the ground or inside a thick, fortified wall. And with this talent that God bestowed on him, above the polished thought and distinct pronunciation, whenever Shawqi described something, he would scatter pearls composed in his powerful poetry, deep in meaning, delicate in expression and musical in tone [1 (pp. 97-99)].

It is indisputable that Shawqi's personality and poetic talents are almost unparalleled in the history of Arabic literature. His personality, as he described it, consisted of four origins, combined branches in which the wisdom of the Arabs was joined to the Greek tendency to describe life and enjoyment and its bliss, with the sensation of Turkism, and the approach of

the Kurds. All of these elements were mixed in a rich and fertile nature, extremely fervent and ever ready to collect and gain, to store wealth, and to inflate such wealth with no limits. Shawqi was able to reap abundant and extensive reading, and his numerous tours in various parts of Europe, especially in his travels to France, the capital of art, literature, and renaissance at that time, where he met personally with most of the poets of the era, and saw with his own eyes the progress of civilization and culture, and became aware of many masterpieces of French literature. He was subsequently prepared to deeply integrate into the real life of his country, to accompany the vicissitudes of his homeland and to have intimate contact with the people. The effect of all of this was that it added prosperity to his personality, and divided and increased it. This strengthened in him an innate affection that always provided him with a zest for life [6 (p.451)].

In everything he composed, Shawqi was a person who loved humanity, regardless of its condition. He rushed to offer congratulations when appropriate, and hurried to lament at the appropriate time, wiping away the tears of the orphaned, the burdened and the oppressed, for whom he sought liberation and sovereignty from oppression and tyranny.

He was the most prepared poet to recite poetry, the most skilled at it and the most capable at it. His poetry was pleasant in rhythm, light in rhyme, his thoughts were on his tongue, and his rhetoric was captured on the tips of his fingers, as if he were pulling poetry out of his sleeve due to its ease of access [7 (p.72)].

His poems combined wisdom, the music of words and the majesty of meanings. But he has poems that reflect Western imagination and what he gained from reading French literature. But Shawqi's special characteristic, which distinguishes him from many poets, was his honesty. He praised when he loved, and did not smile with his lips unless his heart was full of joy; he only lamented when he was heartbroken and distressed. If it weren't for his wealth that protected him from decline, his nature would have enriched him. He was a great soul, high in spirit, witty in speech, generous of hand, helpful to writers, very respectful of others and loved by the greats and nobles of the nation for his abundance of virtue and lofty manners. [8 (pp. 637-639)]

Shawqi's soul was the soul of a human poet. He did not see people as people, but rather as souls working for goodness, love and humanity. He did not see trees as trees, but rather as brides and dancers revealing their throats and covering their legs. He did not see stones as stones, but rather he saw them as creatures between whose sides the breeze of life flowed.

It is as if God, in His perfect justice in all matters, wanted to grant Shawqi all these talents that include musical poetry, fine taste, majestic speech and a strongly woven preface, with a unique approach, along with a humanity with which his feelings flowed and overflowed through his feelings, which elevated him to the ranks of a reformer who called for goodness and the rejection of evil. God deprived him of the ability to read what he wrote due to a nervous illness and prevented him from reading from the paper prepared for delivery, due to his twitching and unstable eyes.

Before him, Beethoven lost his hearing, so he used to entertain his listeners with his symphonies without being able to hear his own music. An astute adage states, 'Fate gives in

proportion to what it takes'. The late great writer Fikri Abatha and the literary doctor Saeed Abdu were among the reciters of his poetry in forums and seminars.

As we analyze the psychology of Ahmed Shawqi, we should mention that he had great faith, and faith is the source of all virtues. Shawqi was a believing man who feared God, was compassionate to the miserable, helped the weak, and asked for mercy for the oppressed and toiling people [1 (pp. 32-33)].

How Shawqi Composed his Poetry

Dawoud Barakat, the head of *Al-Ahram* newspaper at the time, said that Shawqi's writing would take place in the morning. Evening would not come until Shawqi's poem would be broadcast to the public, because the incidents had a severe impact on him, shaking his nerves, arousing him and stimulating his imagination. Most of the time he composed poetry while walking, standing, or sitting with his friends, absent from them with his mind and thoughts. He would sit at his desk to think and write down what he had composed. Smoking one cigarette after another, he would find his idea, and between one word and another, he would find the corresponding word to structure the thought.

He composed among his friends, so he was with them and then not with them. He composed in a vehicle, on the railway and in official society, whenever and wherever he wanted. His companion would not know that he was composing unless he initially heard a murmur from him that resembled a tune coming from a distant valley. Then his eyes would shine. He would raise his hand to his forehead and touch it lightly repeatedly. Then, if he were interrupted during composing, he would move on to any conversation being discussed, with a clear mind. Later, if he resumed the rhyme, even after long days, he would return to it as if he had never stopped, recalling what was completed from it, memorizing the rest of the meaning contained and writing the whole poem after it was complete. Sometimes he would forget a poem for a month, then remember it and write it in one sitting.

In everything written by Shawqi, the human poetry flowed like a stream or a river, delighting the listener and arousing his admiration for what was included in his poems on every occasion in which he sent forth life to beings, as if they were living creatures that felt and suffered. Wherever you look at his poetry, there is, a story or a dialogue, flowing through its human aspects, full of love, goodness and the desire for perfection [1 (p.105)].

Shawqi's Morals

Shawqi was famous for his chaste tongue. He did not satirize anyone, and did not indulge in frivolity and immorality, despite the many circumstances that surrounded him. This is what those who knew him reported about him. Shawqi freed his poetry from frivolity and promiscuity, so he could penetrate religious emotion into his soul.

Shawqi was known for his humility and shyness. When he composed a poem to be recited at a public party, he gave it to one of his friends to recite for him, and he rarely attended to hear it out of humility and to escape the shyness that seized him when the attendees showed him their admiration for the words he composed.

One of Shawqi's characteristics was his reluctance to keep up with his opponents who criticised him in various ways, to the extent that some writers condemned him for that. I believe that his neglect of their affairs was the most effective response. I do not mean to indicate that there were no sincere critics. Shawqi was a human being after all, and a human being is not infallible. What is known about Shawqi is that he was kind to his parents, children, relatives and those who contacted him. He was generous, consoling the poor and needy, and he was kind to the sick and had mercy on the weak. When he saw people cheating and deceiving, he chose to avoid them and not to mix with them.

Shawqi was an educated person with a diverse culture. He devoted himself to reading Arabic poetry during the era of its prosperity, accompanied their great poets, and continually read books on language and literature. He had a strong memory and had no difficulty in memorizing what he read. It was even said that he memorized entire sections of some dictionaries and was fond of history. This is attested to by his poems, which contain historical references known only by those who are deeply involved in the study of history. His greatest masterpiece, 'The Major Incidents in the Nile Valley', which he composed while he was still young, indicates his insight into history. It is both old and modern.

One of the unique habits of this individual is that Shawqi was never seen summer or winter without wearing a suit, complete with its waistcoat. He never used cravats, and replaced them with ready-made, tied bow ties, so that he did not need to make sure they were in their correct place, a task that annoyed his delicate temperament.

He often rode the open-sided tram choosing the last seat in the last car. As for the cinema, he would sit in the first row of the hall because of his poor eyesight. When he returned home from his nightly stay, he would find his personal servant waiting for him to serve him a light dinner, then leave him to read or complete the composition of a poem, play, operetta, or song [1 (pp. 117-118)].

In the last stage of his life, Ahmad Shawqi travelled to Europe, and he was in Paris frequenting the Comedy Francaise, and dealing with the art of poetic theatre. Shawqi was a man of life who loved it and spent on its pleasures. He was generous, tending to help those in need. He did not fluctuate in his policies; he was the righteous son of Egypt, and the son of the Arab East, without exception, wanting glory and liberation for his country from every restriction. He wanted rapid progress for the East in the path of civilization and openness. If he became quickly bored with friends, he was quick to change and anger, and then he was a good companion, quick to be content. He was quite superstitious and anxious about disease, but humane to the utmost limits of humanity, calling for the rejection of hatred, spreading the banner of peace and tolerance in dealing with people, and rising above the ugliness of bad morals. He stayed away from the whims of tribalism and the conflicts of different sects [6 (pp. 439-440)].

Late at night, around 2:00 a.m., the Prince of Poets would begin to compose a poem that he wanted to compose, or he would read a literary masterpiece that he wanted to review. He would begin composing by compiling the beginning, middle, or conclusion of the poem, and then leave the rest of its verses for tomorrow, to finish in the day. In other words, he composed the essence of the poem after the first half of his night and its contents after the first half of his day. As for

reading, the Prince of Poets was very careful in referring to ancient Arabic books due to his great care in choosing the words with which he decorates the verses of his poems. [10]

Ahmad Shawqi was humble, gentle, quiet, with a restrained tongue, and he kept himself removed from disputes. He was very shy and only spoke in a low voice. In fact, he was mostly silent, to the extent that he seemed to those sitting with him as if he were not actually with them or he was talking to himself. Regarding his characteristics, his son Hussein said: 'My father did not like to adhere to a system or appointments. You would see him come home, take off his clothes and throw them aside. He did not like commitment. He stayed up until three or four in the morning and did not wake up before ten. He liked to accompany newspaper editors when they wrote news of him and published his poems on the main pages.

Shawqi did not choose a specific time to compose his poetry, as he was always ready to receive inspiration, but what is known about him is that he often composed poetry after spending his evenings in restaurants and clubs, and he might continue writing until the 4 a.m., as if he were sorting out at night what he had caught in the window of his memory during the day.

Ahmad Mahfouth narrates about the hidden aspects of Shawqi's life, saying: 'He is humble and respects the old and the young, but he is bored and quick to change, and in his private gatherings he tends to have fun and has cute friends like Muhammad Al-Babli, Dr Mahjoub Thabet and Abdul Aziz Al-Bishri. He has many poetic dalliances with Dr Mahjoub and some of his friends and relatives'.

Shawqi was known for his extreme shyness and for not liking to engage in any personal or literary battles. He was also a poet who loved Egypt. He was a true patriot, and his poetry, which was full of sympathy for the people and their various issues, testifies to this. But Shawqi's official position was as a senior employee in the court of Khedive Tawfiq and his son, Khedive Abbas Hilmi II [11(p. 214)].

SHAWQI'S FRIENDS

(Sorted by year of birth)

Ahmad Zaki Ibrahim Al-Najjar (1867-1934)

A linguist and one of the notables of the literary renaissance in Egypt, Al-Najjar made great efforts to revive the Arab heritage and disseminate it. He worked in translation, writing, and research. He also participated in orientalist conferences and worked at the Egyptian University. The following are excerpts of what Ahmad Zaki said about his friend the poet Ahmad Shawqi:

'I would like to lift a small part of the curtain that time has lowered over some aspects of that genius that shone in the sky of Arabism. I will limit my words to a few of my memories of the immortal Shawqi in school life and in the school of life'.

So, let us go back to the year 1882, which is when I had entered the first year at the School of Al-Idara'.

'Among the arrivals in 1885 was a thin, scrawny boy, short in stature and almost handsome in appearance, with sparkling eyes that moved a lot. Despite these successive, discordant

movements, he was calm and meek, as if he was talking to himself, or interacting with a world of spirits. He would not join us in the fun and entertainment we had, nor would he rush with us to catch the ball after we finished eating lunch, or sigh from relief at the end of the study hours' [12 (325-337)].

Sheikh Muhammad al-Basyouni al-Bibani was an intelligent scholar of Al-Azhar, and he used to teach us the art of rhetoric. Outside of school, he specialised in composing poems in praise of Khedive Tawfiq whenever a season came or a holiday came. At night, he was an imam in the prayers. Soon, he saw in his student Shawqi the beginnings of genius and the signs of divine talent, so the professor began presenting his poems to his student before sending them to the royal Council, then to the newspaper (*Al-Waqa'i al-Misriyah*) and other Arab newspapers. Shawqi, with the simplicity of the budding student, suggested erasing this word and correcting that rhyme. Delete this line, and change this part, and the teacher was happy with what he said and stuck with his opinion. The professor spoke about this to us and to the groups ahead of us, without the teacher being arrogant in denying the credit that God had bestowed on the student. This was the first happiness Shawqi had achieved.

Professor Al-Basyouni spoke about this early genius to the holder of the throne and made him understand that the young Ahmad Shawqi was a rare talent with wonderful intelligence, and that he was worthy of his high care to be a flower whose scent was spread in the East and West of the earth. This testimony was one of the biggest reasons that motivated Khedive Tawfiq, in the year 1887, to send Shawqi at his own expense to complete his scientific studies in Paris and to nourish his innate talents with what he saw in the West as masterpieces. His hopes were fulfilled. This was Shawqi's second happiness.

Shawqi returned to Egypt, and we met in the great school of life: in the neighbourhood and in the bureau. We were walking on two parallel lines, but they met on many occasions in Cairo and Alexandria, because of our official work related to each other. We met in Europe for an entire week, in the city of Geneva, with our colleague, the late Omar Lutfi Bey, Dean of the School of Law, to represent Egypt at the Orientalists' Conference held in 1894.

During the Khedive Tawfiq reign, Shawqi's praises were used in proverbs and sung by riders. But the Khedive passed away at the end of the year 1891, and his son and crown prince, His Highness the Khedive Abbas II, succeeded him (January 8, 1892). His inclinations were Frankish, because he received his education at the Terzianum Academy in the capital of Austria, and he spent his youth in all parts of Europe; thus, Shawqi did not have a popular market with him, but rather he was ignored. Thus, Shawqi's status began to decline, and his star tended to fade.

Time passed and political circumstances sent Khedive Abbas to taste Arabic literature, so Shawqi gradually returned to his position until he reached the highest peak, but rather to meet the goal beyond which there was no further goals. He became one of those closest to him and one of those who had a heard word and an effective opinion. He became a refuge for writers, especially narrators of his poetry, and for many students of ranks and honors.

Shawqi used to live in his father's house, and next to that old house was a man of wealth, true virtue and complete dignity. He was the late Hussein Bey Shaheen whom God granted three

daughters, who were the epitome of manners, etiquette and perfection. The golden youth whose wealth had gone were flocking to him, yet he refused and made excuses. He told me that these fools do not propose to the girls, but rather they look forward to the long and wide wealth that will come to each of them after a while, sooner or later. Shawqi won by marrying one of them. Thus, God blessed Shawqi with a good wife in all senses of the word, so he was relieved from the troubles of home life and the hardships of material life, and devoted himself to drawing on the flow of light and receiving divine inspiration, until he excelled with the ingenuity beyond which there is no ingenuity and grew for Egypt, by God's praise, a beautiful plant.

Among the happiness that God bestowed on Shawqi is a happiness that no other poet shared. He did not satirise anyone, nor did he say satirical words. He was one of the greatest supporters of Arabism and one of the greatest servants of Islam. This is how his poems speak and his stances are witnessed. Shawqi's poem 'Al-Burda' also received an unparalleled honor, because the greatest professor for whom the Prophet's Hadith book series was written in Egypt, Sheikh Salim Al-Bishri, with his majesty, high status, and high position, undertook, in person and with his pen, the explanation of this poem. Shawqi penned it while he was still in the tenderness of youth, but his skill made the sheikh recognise the poem's virtue and appreciate its compiler and explanation.

While Shawqi was in exile, Sultan Hussein would occasionally invite those whom he liked, individually and in groups, to have lunch with him at Saray Abdin. Suffice it to say that after finishing eating, he kindly invited me to have coffee in the large foyer. He started talking about the scientific renaissance and the development of the literary movement. He discussed the progress that had occurred in the press and in nationalist songs. Then he asked me about the translation of many words, including the word 'mentalite', and he began to talk about the artistic wit of the Frankish poets. Then he asked me: 'Is there anyone among the Arabs now who is able to keep up with this new modern mentality?' I told him that this quality was evident in many poets of the era, but it was all combined in Ahmad Shawqi.

I do not claim that my words had an impact on the Sultan. But what I know is that a few days later, he issued an order to the late Rushdi Pasha to seek, in his honorable name, the British authority to return Shawqi to the Nile Valley. And it was done.

For additional information, please refer to my previous research, 'Exile and homesickness in the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi'.

The greatest happiness that Shawqi achieved, besides the happiness that God bestowed upon him in wealth and prestige for all the demands of life, is that the opposing poets in every time and place agreed in all the countries of Arabism and in our time to glorify Shawqi and pledge allegiance to him during his lifetime as ruler over them. So, with the acknowledgment of all of them, he truly became the Prince of Poets, a title that no one had ever attained before him. It is highly unlikely that such an event will recur in future of days! [12 (325-337)].

Shakib Arsalan (1869-1946)

Shakib Arsalan was a Lebanese Arab writer, and one of the great Arab thinkers, who was known by the title of Amir al-Bayan due to his prolificity and because he was a writer and poet in addition to being a politician. He was fluent in Arabic, Turkish, French and German. He met

many thinkers and writers during his many travels, and recorded on this trip everything he saw and met. Excerpts of what Shakib Arsalan said in his book, *Shawqi Forty Years Friendship*, about his friend the poet Ahmad Shawqi are included in the following passages.

I did not know Shawqi personally until the year 1892, when I travelled from Istanbul to France to be hospitalised for an illness. Ahmad Shawqi was studying law in Montpellier, and during his school vacation he visited Paris with a friend. While we were in the Latin Quarter, fate brought us together. I no longer remember how we met and got to know each other, but we became like brothers, and began to meet once or twice daily at the Dharcourt Café [13(p.10)].

Shawqi was one who pursued strays and did not let them escape, visiting areas where prey was different. This is why his success in hunting was so great. He brought what no one else had brought, and never said to himself 'Leave this now, because we are busy, and we will return to it later'. Rather, the innovative meaning was a target for him, no matter how he expressed it or how he presented it. This is why Khalil Mutran would say that Shawqi thought about poetry while sitting, standing, walking, moving, or in a vehicle. He fulfilled a duty towards poetry that neither I nor anyone else had performed and devoted himself to poetry, giving it what no one else had done in this era [13 (p. 22)].

If Shawqi exaggerated praise, especially in extolling the prince of his country, he did not taint his poetry with satire, and I never heard a poem of his in which he satirised anyone. God protected him from that. One of the ugliest things about the reputation of poets that causes them be viewed with some suspicion, is that many of them feed on people's flesh and mention defects that may have no basis or have a weak origin. However, people memorised them and studied these poems due to the creativity of their form, until they ended up believing their content and they became historical facts in their view. If Shawqi had been a slanderer, despite his skill, he would have insulted others, perpetuated ugliness, perpetuated grudges, created scandals, and would have satirised himself by satirising others. How true is this saying: The vessel oozes out what is in it. The chastity of Shawqi's tongue and his adherence to a path that had long been followed by poets, great, young, and average, is evidence of his pure nature and excessive modesty, as well as the soundness of his mind and the originality of his opinion. How many a times has poetry caused strife, bloodshed, embarrassed a group, and deprived the world of blessings! [13 (p.27)].

Shawqi was a pardoner of pure speech and pure soul, and virtues rather than the ugliness were reflected in his mirror. He was not free from envy and competition, but he was too generous to respond to idle talk and too great to care about envy, as if he saw himself above this. He would ignore despite his ability to respond, and humble himself due to his nobility.

He also avoided debates and discussions in his poetry, so he did not attack nor was he attacked. Although this might occur in his absence, he met criticism with silence, and perhaps his silence was due to his self-confidence and his feeling that he was the rock from which the torrent retreated [13 (p.28)].

One of the strangest coincidences occurred in 1926, when Shawqi and I met in Paris. He greeted me at the Majestic Hotel, so I returned his greetings at the hotel where he was staying in the Latin Quarter. I asked about him, and was told that he had gone out for a picnic and found out

that this hotel was a hundred meters from the Darkour Café, where Shawqi was sitting there with a singer, Muhammad Abdul-Wahab, so I sat with them and began to contemplate the cycle of time. I had first met Shawqi in this same café. Thirty-six years had passed since that time and we had not met in Paris. When we met, we found ourselves unintentionally in this café as well. So, I said to Shawqi: 'Do you know how many years have passed since we met in this café? It has been thirty-six years. He was not comfortable with talk that reminded him of old age, so he responded: 'Why do you hold on to these dates?' I laughed and knew that he was fed up with this memory. I should have remembered the blessing of our meeting again after such a long time. [13 (p. 48)].

Alas, when I met with Shawqi in Suez, coming from Cairo to visit me, it was our last meeting. I noticed his showing signs of weakness, as if he were at least ten years older than his age. I was astonished that age had taken such a toll on him, and that among the brothers who had gathered there were those who were much older, and their backs did not arch, their brows did not wrinkle, so I felt within myself fear for his health. After we parted, I followed the news of his health, and I wished that he would come to Switzerland so I could see him; I regretted our division. Whoever has not tasted the departure of loved ones and then sees their traces after them, does not know what sadness is.

One day in October 1932, while reading a newspaper, my eyes fell on the news of the death of the great poet in Egypt, and the name 'Shawqi' was written incorrectly. I was shocked by this news, and my nerves were rattled, and I thought that the deceased could be no other than Shawqi. The next day we confirmed the news, and it was a terrifying day. When the Al-Jihad newspaper came, I learned that the Prince of Poets had left this world at the mercy of his Lord at four in the morning on Friday, October 14, 1932. [13 (p.94)].

Tawfiq Diab wrote: 'What matters to the inheritors of Shawqi's works and the lovers of Arabic literature, is the preciousness of what he left behind from the treasures of his genius and the remnants of his literature. These are what remain. Literature has a state with high thrones. Immortality will call from above its highest minarets: The Prince of Poets has died; Shawqi has died. Let the Egyptians, and let the Arabs cry in every Arab country or those inhabited by an Arab, and let the Muslims cry' [13 (p.95)].

As part of the elegy of Shakib Arslan for his friend Ahmad Shawqi, he described Shawqi's poetry over the course of fifty years, as a glory for poetry, the Arabs and the East. The entire poem (76 verses), is in the collection of Shakib Arslan.

وَالْيَوْمَ يُعْجِزُهُمْ بِنْدَبِ مَمَاتِهِ	قَدْ أَعْجَزَ الشُّعْرَاءُ طَوْلَ حَيَاتِهِ
فِي الشَّرْقِ أَجْمَعَ مُنْذُ فَتَقَى لَهَاتِهِ	هَذَا أَمِيرُ الشُّعْرِ غَيْرَ مُدَافِعٍ
لَا نَشْقُ ذَاكَ الْوَحْيَ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ	لَوْ كَانَ وَحْيِي بَعْدَ وَحْيِ مُحَمَّدٍ
نَفَحَاتِهِ وَالذَّهْرَ بَعْضَ رُؤَايِهِ	السِّحْرُ فِي نَفَثَاتِهِ وَالزَّهْرُ فِي
غَيْرِ الطَّبِيعَةِ وَهِيَ فِي مِرَاتِهِ	فَتَرَى الطَّبِيعَةَ قَبْلَ نَظَرَتِهِ لَهَا
رَغَمَ الْقَلَى يَرُودُونَ مِنْ أُبْيَاتِهِ	وَلَكُمْ مَزْرُوثٌ بِحَاسِدِينَ لِفَضْلِهِ
سَرَى عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ ثَقُلَ سُبَاتِهِ	كَانَتْ قَصَائِدُهُ هِيَ الصَّوْتُ الَّذِي
هِيَ صَوْرُ إِسْرَافِيلَ فِي رَعَقَاتِهِ	بَعَثَتْ بِهِ رُوحَ الْحَيَاةِ كَأَنَّهَا
أَشْعَارُهُ تَحْيَى وَتُحْيِي أُمَّةً	تَجِدُ الْحَيَاةَ الْحَقَّ فِي كَلِمَاتِهِ
أَبْدًا وَيَرِثُنِي الشَّرْقُ خَيْرَ حُمَاتِهِ	يَبْكِي بِكَ الْإِسْلَامُ خَيْرَ جُنُودِهِ

هَذَا الْإِخَاءُ نَمَزُ مِنْ قَهْوَاتِهِ
يَشْجِي وَيُسْلِي النَّاسَ فِي نَعْمَاتِهِ
وَالطَّائِرُ الْمَحْكِي فِي جَنَاتِهِ
مَضَتْ السُّنُونُ الْأَرْبَعُونَ وَنَحْنُ فِي
قَدْ كُنْتُ فِي الدُّنْيَا هَزَاراً صَادِحاً
فَالآنَ كُنْ بِجَلَالِ رَبِّكَ سَاجِداً

He incapacitated poets throughout his life,
today he incapacitates them with the mourning of his death.

This prince of poetry, without a competitor,
in the entire East since his uvula split.

Had there been a revelation after Muhammad's revelation,
that revelation would have been separated from his verses.

Magic is in its emanations, blossom in its emanations,
and eternity is some of its narrators.

So, you see nature before he looks at it,
other than nature while it is in his mirror.

I have come across those who envy his advantage,
despite their hatred, they narrate from his verses.

His poems were the voice that,
relieved Islam of the weight of its slumber.

They blew in it the spirit of life as if,
they were the trumpet of Angel Israfil in its screams.

His poems revive and salute a nation,
That finds true life in his words.

Islam cries over you, its best soldiers ever,
and the East mourns its best protectors.

Forty years have passed while we are,
in this brotherhood, drinking from its cafes.

In this world, you were a warbling bird,
who amused and entertained people with his melodies.

So now, in the majesty of your Lord, be tutting,
while the talking bird is in His gardens.

Hafeth Ibrahim (1872-1932)

Hafeth Ibrahim was a famous Upper Egyptian poet from Assiut, who holds the titles of the Poet of the People and also the Poet of the Nile, given to him by his friend, Ahmad Shawqi. He was born poor, and his father died in Dayrut when he was four years old, so his mother moved with

him to Cairo and stayed with her brother, who took care of him and raised him. When Hafeth Ibrahim left his uncle's home, he worked as a lawyer for some time, and then joined the Military Academy in 1888. He graduated in 1891 with the rank of Second Lieutenant in the Egyptian Army and was appointed to the Ministry of the Interior.

Hafeth Ibrahim was a cheerful, quick-witted man who filled gatherings with his exuberance and sense of humour. He was intelligent, quick to memorise, and had a strong intuition. Despite these wonderful gifts, he was afflicted with indifference, laziness and a lack of interest in developing his intellectual stock. Hafeth's greatest problem was that he was a contemporary of Shawqi, and he was overshadowed by him.

National poetry reached its peak on the tongues of Shawqi and Hafeth. They carried the banner of the poetic renaissance in the modern era, and sang of patriotism; the great events that took place in Egypt and the East resonated in their poetry. Both poets had an impact and nourished the national movement with the finest sources of national poetry. Their stars shone in one era, they created in the same generation, and they passed away in the same year (1932). It was not until three months after Hafeth's death that Shawqi joined him as a supreme companion [14 (p. 42)].

Comparing Hafeth to Shawqi

The lives of Hafeth and Shawqi each reveal that they came from two completely different environments, sharing nothing but the similarity of the beginning of birth and the end of their lives. Shawqi was considered the poet of the palace and the people and Hafeth was thought of as the poet of the poor.

When Egypt lost its two greatest poets, Hafeth Ibrahim and Ahmad Shawqi, Hafeth preceded Shawqi in death by four months. When Hafeth died, Shawqi was in Alexandria, and his secretary informed him of the death of his 'arch-friend'. He deliberately concealed the news for three days, out of the secretary's desire to keep bad news away from him. Shawqi was very pessimistic about the news of death in his last days. The secretary also knew that despite the fierce competition between the two poets, Hafeth was close to Shawqi's heart. When the secretary revealed the news, Shawqi was distracted for a few moments, then raised his head and recited the first verse of his famous elegy for Hafeth.

'I would have preferred that you say my elegy,
O you who justifies the dead from the living'.

This was the relationship between the two poets: a competition, a struggle to own the reins of poetry, affection, and attachment. Theirs was a relationship of competition, but the conflict did not diminish the affection between Hafeth and Shawqi.

Historical accounts reveal that most of Hafeth's gatherings included Shawqi, and the poets' conference that resulted in the pledge of allegiance of the great Arab poets from various Arabic-speaking countries to Shawqi as the Emir of Poetry - five years before his death - was headed by Hafeth. Hafeth was the first to pledge allegiance to Shawqi as the Emir of Poetry. This reality also uncovers that Shawqi's elegy for Hafeth, of which I mentioned the first line, is the most

tender and most sincere of Shawqi's elegies, despite the abundance of what Shawqi said in his chapter on elegies!

Shawqi was accustomed to spending evenings in the palace and enjoying the company of princes due to his upbringing. To the contrary, Hafeth was inclined to frequent literary gatherings in downtown cafes. He had the well-known tendency of the Egyptian 'country boys', so he was often described as a 'joke boy', one who was quick-witted and filled gatherings with humour. He was very generous with his companions, to the point that he was described as extravagant. Al-Aqqad said: 'A year's salary in the hands of Hafeth Ibrahim is equal to a month's salary'.

Shawqi and Hafeth were portrayed as enemies, but the relationship between them was the opposite. They met over their love of poetry, and each acknowledged the other's status. They were able to maintain a close friendship that bound them together, and they transformed the competition between them into satirical poetic duel, which many thoughts were a struggle, but it was nothing more than common banter. They even succeeded in overcoming their political differences with a noticeable expansion of horizons, as Shawqi was always a supporter of the palace, and was the most severe in criticising Ahmad Orabi and his revolution. Hafeth, to the contrary, was a supporter of the rebellion against the palace, and was even a student of the great Orabi revolutionary Mahmoud Sami Al-Baroudi.

I was mischievous enough to tease Hafeth, and said that one of my friends had told me that he saw Shawqi smoking cigarettes in the street. Hafeth got upset and said: 'This crazy man is composing poetry. Come with me'. Hafeth, with permission from the manager, walked to the café, and asked for a hookah and smoked it in a terrible way. Then he said that he knew that you were one of Shawqi's friends, but that he did not know how you became friends or why. For fifty years, people have been grouping Hafeth and Shawqi in the same as eggs and bread, so why does Shawqi want to separate from me? I said that I did not know how to gossip and I would not tell him this [15 (p. 316)]

People were passionate in their comparisons between Shawqi to Hafeth. In my opinion, Hafeth was unique for the smoothness of his poetry, its influence and the consistency of his verses, while Shawqi's work contained verses which were signs in which he exudes his magnificence, so that if Hafeth had spent many ages on them, he would not have been able to write one of Shawqi's caliber [16].

Although Hafeth was a competitor to Shawqi, he was not able to keep up with him in many of the poetic purposes and arts, including describing Egyptian antiquities in a comprehensive and exhaustive manner. This was because Hafeth did not have as deep an understanding of history as Shawqi, and the tributaries of his culture were not as diverse as they were with Shawqi. Dr Taha Hussein expressed his belief that Shawqi was more fertile than Hafeth in nature, richer in material, more penetrating in insight, more advanced in meanings, and more skilled in imitating the earlier poets. He felt that Hafeth imitated words and images, while Shawqi imitated meanings as well.

Shawqi had art that Hafeth did not master and could not master. Shawqi was the undisputed poet of singing, and the creator of illustrative poetry in the Arabic language [17 (p. 75)].

Dr Ghazi Al-Qusaibi, in his new book (Bayt), compares Shawqi to Hafeth. He states that it was Hafeth Ibrahim's misfortune to live in the time of Ahmad Shawqi, just as it had been the misfortune of a number of poets who lived in the era of Al-Mutanabbi. Shawqi and Hafeth were like two horses in a race from the beginning of the twentieth century. However, during the last decade of his life, Shawqi took off suddenly, as a winning horse does at the end of the race, leaving a lot of dust behind him to Hafeth. No one doubts that Shawqi won the race for Andalusiyat (the poems written during his exile in Spain) and what followed them, and as a result of his poetic plays. Yet if Shawqi had won the great booty, the title of Prince of Poets, then Hafeth came out of the celebration with a lot of chickpeas, receiving the title Poet of the Nile [18].

Dr Muhammad Sabry Al-Sarbouny mentioned that he met Hafeth to talk about Hafeth's poetry, yet they were talked about Shawqi [19 (p. 111)]

Shawqi is the poet of genius and Hafeth is the poet of talent. To establish the difference between the two gifts is to establish the difference between the two men. Talent is a faculty by which its owner can express himself in a style that is approved by art and satisfies taste. Its characteristics include clarity, consistency, elegance, ease, naturalness and precision. As for genius, it is a kind of inspiration that continues and renews itself, sometimes accompanying and sometimes breaking away. Its most special characteristics are originality, creativity and creation. Thus, the genius rises and falls according to his presence or separation. He often sends poetry from the overflow of his mind as it comes, without refining or polishing it.

Hafeth endures great fatigue in constructing poems, because he gives birth to it idea by idea, and pours it out drop by drop, hunting for meanings and restricting them in terms or sections. Perhaps, the end of the poem comes to him before its beginning, and he finds the second half of the verse before the first half; he then arranges these verses for the slightest connection and the weakest link. And the brilliant craftsmanship comes and deceives you about the defect in the coating and about the disintegration in the connection of the style.

Shawqi was not limited by craftsmanship nor restricted by form; rather, he is an overflow that mocks boundaries, and a light that penetrates through the curtains, and an inspiration that connects to infinity. A poet like Al-Mutanabbi or Hugo opens the beginning of the poem as if he is opening the door of heaven for you!

Shawqi is a poet whose spirit is stronger than his art, whose poetry is broader than his knowledge, whose wisdom is more solid than his character, and whose ability is greater than his readiness. You do not doubt that he is a mediator for a hidden spirit that guides him, and a messenger for a divine power that inspires him.

Shawqi, is under the inspiration of genius. The subject descends upon him as a whole, then thinking about the goal and staring at the purpose distracts him from its details, so he sends it from the overflow of the mind as continuous, sequential poetry whose meanings are too narrow for its words as the sandbanks are too narrow for the raging, foaming flood. Hence, innovation, complexity, flow, and depth were among the strongest characteristics of Shawqi, just as imitation, simplicity, stiffness, and superficiality were among the most obvious characteristics of Hafeth [20].

Shawqi differs from Hafeth, for while Shawqi is influenced by calm emotion, subject to the poet's control, and the expression of tumultuous, surging emotions, Hafeth is influenced by his own nature, which is represented in his ability to arouse emotion with what he possesses of passionate emotion, and the roar of flowing thoughts, and the embodied language with its own rhythm and special tension, a language like the language of the ancients, a language that shakes and sweeps, with a high wave of emotion [21 (p.42)].

Shawqi was one of the greatest scholars of the secrets of the Arabic language, and its expressions, images and words, such that his poems contained linguistic wealth that the poems of his contemporaries did not achieve except in rare cases. Some scholars of literature believed that Shawqi was more knowledgeable than Hafeth about the language, stating the argument that Hafeth did not possess anything but a solid introduction, while Shawqi would come across rare words with which to embroider his poetry without the reader feeling that they were brought in through affectation or artificiality [22 (p. 252)].

Hafeth was a cheerful, outgoing person, unlike the quiet, shy Shawqi. Al-Zayyat reported having met Hafeth face-to-face in a café in the Opera Square. He talked about Shawqi and I listened, telling funny jokes and I laughed, until he said, 'I will recite my poem to you so you can see what you think of it'. He began to read to me his famous poem in his magnificent voice and expressive delivery. When he finished, he looked at me with inquiring eyes. With loud applause, I congratulated him on his repeated repetitions. I then said, 'Hafeth! Shawqi's poems are for reading and your poems are for listening. His meanings are for the elite and your meanings are for the public! He then said in his sarcastic, humorous tone: 'Do I care about anything but the public?' [23].

Perhaps these contrasts between the worlds of the two poets can be attributed to the nature of Shawqi's life, which was open to worlds within and outside, and even to other cultures that added a dimension to his own experience. These experiences were not available to Hafeth, as he was limited to the narrow dimensions of his own world, which was confined to major events in Egypt, and to places that did not extend beyond the centre of Cairo, where Abdeen and the National Library are located. Shawqi's world soared with the two birds 'Fedrine' and 'Bonnet' from Paris to Egypt, then with Shakespeare, then with the Hagia Sophia Mosque, and from the forest of Bologna to the Bosphorus, from Andalusia to the Concorde, from Tokyo to Damascus and back to the Bosphorus Bridge [23 (p.231)].

There were differences between the lives of Ahmad Shawqi Hafeth Ibrahim, which are very similar to the differences between Goethe and Schiller, as Goethe and Shawqi were rich, and Schiller and Hafeth were poor, but genius does not know wealth and poverty. Shawqi was known to bathe in cologne, and not in water, while Hafeth liked to live the life of the country people, wearing a jalabiya and a coat most of the time.

Shawqi did not have a group of friends, but he received his guests in his palace in semi-official receptions, such as tea parties, cocktail evenings, or dinners, and he also received some writers and journalists in his office. Or he would sit with some of his friends in upscale shops. He was a man of few words, lost in the kingdom of God.

As for Hafeth Ibrahim, he had more than one group, and wonderful jokes were told about him, but they were not recorded. Sheikh Abdul Aziz Al-Bishri and Muhammad Al-Babli participated in the jokes and humour with him, and the three of them were the knights of humour of their generation [24 (p. 215)].

Whoever reads Shawqi's poetry hears its singing and music from the folds of that poetry. There is no doubt that the amount of music and deep melodies in Shawqi's poetry is much greater than Hafeth's floating verbal music, which is closer to rhetorical noise than to music [19 (p.108)].

Hafeth Ibrahim was accustomed to performing his poems and was adept in reciting them, but his singing did not extend beyond the ears to the depths of the soul. As for Shawqi, he did not recite his poetry himself, nor did he show his poetry to anyone, nor did he sing about it. However, every poem or verse of his would be met with loud acclaim whenever it was published in the newspapers. With his singing, Shawqi would transport us from the world of unhappiness, misery, hypocrisy, and slavery into the world of freedom, beauty and magic. If Shawqi strikes all the strings of our hearts with his poetry, this is only because genius is latent and present. It could be covered with scum, moss, and some traces of the undesirable old, but the eternal fountain of poetry, the fountain of emotion and conscience, would soon be discovered and shed the scum away [25 (pp. 41-42)].

Khalil Mutran said, 'Both Hafeth and Shawqi had the necessary readiness to perfect performance and eloquence of expression, but Hafeth used to write his poetry for reading and contemplation, while Shawqi's poetry had a broader scope, because as I said, he was flooding and received inspiration from his feelings and emotions' [26 (p. 684)].

Hafeth was Shawqi's equal in reviving the state of poetry, and while Shawqi was distinguished from him by leadership, as previously mentioned, Hafeth was distinguished from him by the fact that his upbringing and life were popular, while Shawqi's upbringing and life were aristocratic. Hafeth was closer to the spirit and feelings of the people, and was able to portray the pain that he shared with them, as he had been burned by its flames, so he was more eloquent in expressing their pains, and his phrases were easier and closer to realising their meanings than the phrases of Shawqi.

Hafeth Ibrahim was born in 1872 to an Egyptian father and a mother from a Turkish family. His father, Ibrahim Effendi Fahmy, was an engineer who supervised the Dairout Barrages, where Hafeth was born. His father died when he was only four, and his maternal uncle, Muhammad Effendi Niyazi, sponsored him. Hafeth lived under his care in the lower middle class and felt from a young age the suffering of the popular classes in terms of effort and poverty. When his poetic talents appeared, he was an honest and faithful interpreter of these classes [14 (p. 95)].

Hafeth did not have the imagination of Ahmad Shawqi nor the depth of Khalil Mutran, and therefore, he could not create anything new in the world of imagination and invention of meanings. For this reason, he leaned towards the nation, embodying its hopes. He gravitated towards the Arab people, teasing their ambitions in their new awakening.

Hafeth did not receive much in the way of foreign heritage, so his source was his personal experiences and the direct observations that he obtained through his interactions with the people and contact with the leaders of thought [6 (p 142)].

The rivalry between Hafeth and Shawqi had reached extremes, and the threat of that competition was increased by the fact that Hafeth was a man of sweet spirit and had connections with journalists by which he influenced their grudges against Shawqi whenever he wanted.

Whenever I consider Shawqi's dominance over Hafeth, I wonder. Hafeth was extremely intelligent, his knowledge of the history and literature of the Arabs was beyond description, and his understanding of the subtleties of Egyptian life was a marvel. Genius? How could Shawqi surpass him, a man whose appearance and speech indicated that he was just one of the common people not distinguished by genius or brilliance?

I believe that it was his desire to talk that weakened Hafeth's poetic talent, for he talked a lot, and by doing so, he reached thousands of hearts. Through talking he became lost, because conversing detracts from the psychological energies that are no longer suitable for chanting [15 (p. 64)].

As for Shawqi, he preferred silence in order to preserve what was stored in his psychological powers, and to deliver poetry, not talk to people. These efforts won him immortality.

Hafeth used to talk to those he met with verbiage, so the day would not pass without his suffering from excessive fatigue, while Shawqi would run away from people when he began to write, so you would only see him wandering on his face from road to road and in a state of foreboding of madness.

Mubarak stated that Hafeth used to lengthen his dialogue when he was an employee at the Egyptian Book House in 1925, so the late Ahmad Nasim began to point out one of his psychological killers, telling him that the thing that irritates Hafeth the most is when you tell him that you saw Shawqi moving from tram to tram with a cigarette in his hand and signs of astonishment on his face.

Mubarak said that such petulance made him try this commandment. He reported that he told Hafeth that Shawqi moved a lot in the streets, and in a state that was overcome by emotion, Hafeth cried out. For what purpose does this crazy man treat poetry? He hates that my name is associated with his name, even though people have been saying for more than twenty years that Shawqi and Hafeth are like eggs and bread [15 (p. 65)].

THE POET OF THE NILE AFTER HALF A CENTURY

Fate linked Hafeth and Shawqi, as they existed in the same era and in the same city. The competition between the two poets may be considered a positive force that pushed them towards innovation and excellence, and perhaps this actually happened at some stages of their lives. The writings of contemporaries of Hafeth and Shawqi spoke of some writers, poets and journalists rallying around one of the two men, tempting him from time to time to wink at his friend or disparage his talent, or raise himself a degree above his friend.

And now, after half a century has passed since the end of the competition claims, with its many benefits and little gain, we can only acknowledge it. We claim that Ahmad Shawqi was upset with this competition, and he saw that it was unfair to him to be compared to Hafeth, and to compare his poetic art to Hafeth's art, even though the judgments ended in favouring Shawqi.

Opposites met in the soul of Hafeth, the human being. This delusional man was afraid of the days and poverty. His fear did not push him to be keen on his job, as he managed it from the café, as Al-Zayyat indicates. Poverty did not prevent him from being generous, but he was extravagant to the point of foolishness sometimes, as he would give away a quarter of his salary in charity, pay for everything his friends requested at the café, and hold luxurious banquets. He was the most capable poet of his time in spending money, and his livelihood came to him from where he did not expect.

This did not prevent him from being one of the owners of anecdotes, jokes, funny situations, and sarcastic comments. In addition, his keenness on the job and his fear of the interruption of his salary did not prevent him from maintaining the life of a bohemian artist at large, who did not care about appointments or duties. All of this contradicts the fact that material security in the execution of his job did not push him to devote himself to poetry; rather, the opposite was true, as his most fertile creative stage was when he was poor and homeless, during his return from Sudan, fired from his job in 1900, and his employment at the National Library, about ten years later [27].

Good Brotherly Friends

The insiders assured us that Shawqi and Hafeth were good friends, and that if a cloud of apathy appeared on the horizon of that friendship, then it would be a summer cloud that soon cleared. Its source was intriguing. People would come to Hafeth and delude him that what was written against him in a particular newspaper was at the behest of Shawqi. Then they would go to Shawqi and swear to him in firm faith that Hafeth was the one who incited the particular writer to attack him in an article published in a specific magazine [10 (p.4)]

Shawqi in the Poetry of Hafeth:

In the following poem, Hafeth bid farewell to Shawqi when he went to the Orientalists' Conference in Geneva in 1894.

يا شاعر الشرق اتند *** ماذا تحاول بعد ذاك
هذي النجوم نظمتمها *** درر القريض وما كفاك
وسموت في أفق السعود *** فكدت تعثر بالسماك
ودعتك مصر رسولها *** للغرب مذ عرفت علاك

O poet of the East, slow down,
What are you trying to do after that?

You arranged the stars as,
Pearls of poetry yet that was not enough for you.

And you soared the Sa'oud planets,
And you almost stumbled over the sky.

Egypt called you out as its messenger,
To the West since it knew your highness.

When Shawqi wanted to hold the wedding of his daughter 'Amina' in the vineyard of Ibn Hani (Shawqi's house), he invited the poet of the Nile, Hafeth Ibrahim, to attend. However, he was sick, so he sent an apology and his congratulations to the Prince of Poets. This is part of the poem in which he congratulates him on the wedding of his daughter Amina, and apologises for not attending due to an illness. It is a poem that contains the most delicate feelings of friendship and brotherhood that connect the two poets. It is an apologetic letter that shows Hafeth's skill in presenting his apology, which he mixed with his love, appreciation and glorification of Shawqi [28]

يا سيدي وإمامي *** ويا أديب الزمان
قد عاقني سوء حظي *** عن حفلة المهرجان
وكننت أول ساعي *** إلى رحاب «ابن هاني»
لكن مرضت لنحسي *** في يوم ذاك القران
وقد كفاني عقابا *** ما كان من حرمانني
حُرمت رؤية «شوقي» *** ولثم تلك البنان
فاصفح فانت خليك *** الصفح عن كل جاني
إن فانتني أن أوفي *** بالأمس حق التهاني
فاقبله مني قضاء *** وكن كريم الجنان

My master and my imam, and the writer of the time.
My bad luck prevented me, from attending the festival party.
I was the first to seek, the spaciousness of Ibn Hani.
But I fell ill because of my bad luck, on the day of that wedding.
My deprivation was enough, a punishment for me.
I was deprived of seeing Shawqi, and kissing those fingers.
So, forgive, for you are worthy, of forgiveness for every offender.
If I missed fulfilling the right of congratulations yesterday.
Accept it from me later on, and be kindhearted.

When Shawqi was exiled at the beginning of World War I, he sent a poetic letter to Hafeth, complaining about his pain and sadness, due to his distance from his homeland and his alienation, which affected his soul and made him disturbed in heart, sad and in pain, longing to return to the water of the Nile after his separation. Hafeth Ibrahim replied to him in a poetic letter expressing his pain and sadness, due to his distance from his homeland. These two letters exchanged between Shawqi and Hafeth are evidence of the extent of the connection and brotherhood, support and consolation that brought together the two great poets.

For more details about this incident, please refer to my previous research, 'Exile and Homesickness in the Poetry of Ahmad Shawqi'.

Hafeth continued to glorify Shawqi and raise his status and position, rejoicing in his joy, grieving in his sadness and feeling pain in his pain. This is indicated by his participation in every occasion that passed by. When Shawqi returned from exile, Hafeth was the first to rejoice with

him, so he welcomed his return with a great reception, and he recited the following wonderful poem expressing his loyalty and love for the Prince of Poets.

أهلاً بـشمس المشرقين ومرحبا
بالأبلج المرجو من إخوانه
أشكو إليك من الزمان وزمرة
جرحت فؤاد الشعر في أعيانه
كم خارج عن أفقه حصب الورى
بقريضه والعجب ملء جنانه
يختال بين الناس متند الخطا
ريح الغرور تهب من أردانه
كم صك مسمعا بجندل لفظه
وأطال محنتنا بطول لسانه
ما زال يعلن بيننا عن نفسه
حتى استغاث الصم من إعلانه

Welcome to the sun of the two destinations and welcome,
To the radiant one hoped for from his brothers.

I complain to you about time and a group,
That wounded the heart of poetry in its notables.

How many outside its horizon the pebbles of the people,
With his poetry and arrogance filling his mind.

He struts among the people, slow in his steps,
The smell of vanity blows from his robes.

How many he has deafened our ears with the hail of his words,
And prolonged our ordeal with the length of his tongue.

He still announces himself among us
Until the deaf cried out for help from his statement.

After Shawqi returned to his homeland, everyone honored him, and they held a celebration in his honor in 1920. This celebration was called 'Souk Okath' and many writers participated in it. This celebration was headed by Shawqi and the first of the invitees was Hafeth who recited the following poem on this occasion:

أتيت سوق عكاظ
أسعى بأمر الرئيس
أزجي إليه قواف
منكسات الرؤوس
قال الرئيس ومن ذا
يقول بعد الرئيس
بنات أفكار شوقي
في جلوة كالعروس

I came to Souq Okath,
to seek by the leader's order.

I send to him rhymes,
With heads bowed.

The president said, and who,
Would say after the president.

Shawqi's brilliant ideas,
In a radiance like a bride [29]

However, the grudges of geniuses, like the grudges of children, melt away quickly. In 1927, an Arab party was held to honor Shawqi, and Hafeth recited a poem that included:

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

Prince of rhymes, I have come to pledge allegiance,
And these are the delegations of the East who have pledged allegiance with me.

Shawqi could not control himself, so he rose from among those present, embraced Hafeth, and kissed his forehead. It was a touching moment in which the tears of the two great poets flowed.

For more details about this incident, please refer to my previous research,
'The Inauguration Ceremony of Ahmad Shawqi as Prince of Arab Poets'.

Death Kills Jealousy

The summer of 1932 was an ill-fated season, during which the lives of two great poets who elevated Egypt to a high place, passed away. Hafeth Ibrahim died on 21 June 1932, four months before Shawqi who died on 14 October 1932, so Shawqi mourned him like a man awaiting his own death.

يا مُنصِفَ المَوْتِ مِنَ الأَحْيَاءِ قَدْ كُنْتُ أَوْثَرُ أَنْ تَقُولَ رِثَائِي
قَدَّرْتُ وَكُلَّ مَنِيَّةٍ بِقَضَاءٍ لَكِنْ سَبَقَتْ وَكُلَّ طَوْلٍ سَلَامَةٍ
الْحَقُّ نَادَى فِاسْتَجَبْتَ وَلَمْ تَزَلْ بِالْحَقِّ تَحْفَلُ عِنْدَ كُلِّ نِدَاءٍ
وَيَدِثُ لَوْ أَنِّي فِدَاكَ مِنَ الرَّدَى وَالْكَاذِبُونَ الْمُرْجِفُونَ فِدَائِي
الْنَّاطِقُونَ عَنِ الضَّغِينَةِ وَالْهَوَى الْمَوْغِرِو المَوْتِ عَلَى الأَحْيَاءِ
مَنْ ذَا يُحْطِمُ رَفْرَفَ الْجُزَاءِ مَا حَطَمُوكَ وَإِنَّمَا بِكَ حُطِمُوا
غَرَاءَ تَحْفَظُ كَالْيَدِ الْبَيْضَاءِ بِالْأَمْسِ قَدْ حَلَيْتَنِي بِقَصِيدَةٍ
وَكَمَا عَلِمْتَ مَوَدَّتِي وَوَفَائِي غِيظَ الْحَسُودِ لَهَا وَقُمْتُ بِشُكْرِهَا
وَأَمَامَ مَنْ نَجَلْتُ مِنَ الْبُلْغَاءِ يَا حَافِظَ الْفُصْحَى وَحَارِسَ مَجْدِهَا
حَتَّى حَمَيْتَ أَمَانَةَ الْقَدَمَاءِ مَا زِلْتُ تَهْتِفُ بِالْقَدِيمِ وَفَضْلِهِ

I would have preferred that you should say my eulogy,
You are the justice of the dead from the living.
But you preceded, and every long life is destiny,
and every death is by decree.

God The Alright called, and you answered,
and you have not ceased to attend to the rightness at every call.
I wish I were your ransom from death,
and the liars and slanderers, my ransom.
The speakers of malice and vagary,
the triggers of the dead against the living.
They did not destroy you, but through you they were destroyed,
Who can destroy the flaps of Gemini?
Yesterday, you adorned me with a beautiful poem,
that preserves like a white hand,
The envious were enraged by it, and I thanked it,
as you know my affection and loyalty.
O preserver of the classical language, guardian of its glory,
leader of those who emerged from the eloquent.
You still call out for the ancient and its virtues,
till you protected the trust of the ancients.

It is his greatest poem Shawqi said before his death. Perhaps it is the best thing that came to his mind with kindness and tenderness. Shawqi's elegy is eloquent in its wording, profound in its meaning, sweet in music, and filled with wisdom and morals. This indicates Shawqi's mastery of his poetic skills. He mourned Hafeth with a eulogy befitting him, in which he demonstrated his status and poetic position, and that he was a poet who mastered his poetic skill [30].

It was among the wonders of destiny that Egypt's two best poets in the modern time, lived and died nearly at the same time.

'It is extremely unfair to deny that a huge void has been created by the death of these two great poets who restored the power of poetry to its former glory and extended its leadership to the Nile Valley' [31 (p. 45)].

Khalil Mutran (1872-1949)

Khalil Mutran was a famous Lebanese poet who lived most of his life in Egypt. He was known for his deep dive into meanings and his combination of Arab and foreign culture. He was also a great writer, working in history and translation. Mutran was known for his abundance of knowledge and inspiration in French and Arabic literature. This, in addition to his gentle nature and peaceful demeanor, were reflected in his poetry. He was given the title 'The Poet of the Two Countries', meaning Egypt and Lebanon, and after the deaths of Hafeth and Shawqi, they called him 'the poet of the Arab countries. During his stay in Egypt, Mutran worked on translating Shakespeare's plays and other foreign works. He also played an active role in promoting the National Theatre in Egypt. Due to his distinguished literary efforts, the Egyptian government held a festival to honor him, attended by a large gathering of writers and thinkers of the time.

Shawqi was familiar with Mutran; they were friends, as Mutran's politeness and generous character made him everyone's friend. Shawqi loved to play practical jokes on Mutran.

Shawqi was a close friend of Khalil Mutran for thirty years, and their friendship throughout that period was flawless. The Prince of Poets, in some years, composed a poem every year to amuse

the poet of the two countries. He once composed a lengthy poem in which he claimed that Mutran had won a prize and was the first winner in the bonds of the Land Bank, and that the poor and the miserable should be rejoicing at this news and dancing for him with joy because Mutran will shower them with donations and gifts. As a result of publishing this poem on the pages of newspapers, petitions from the needy began to shower down on Mutran from all sides.

In another situation, Shawqi composed verses about Khalil Mutran in which he said that Mutran had quarreled with a French journalist named Paul Mals and invited him to a duel. Here, the Prince of Poets went on to describe the fight, indicating that Mutran was injured while defending his honor in the battlefield. As soon as Mutran's family and relatives residing in Syria saw this poem in the Egyptian newspapers, they were terrified by the news, and showered him with a barrage of telegrams and letters, congratulating him on his victory and inquiring about his condition [32].

According to Mutran, Shawqi composes among his friends, so he is with them and not with them. He performs in the vehicle, on the railway, and in official society, whenever and wherever he wants. His companions don not know that he is composing until they initially hear a murmur resembling a tune coming from a distant valley, then he sees his eyes lighting up and moving, then he raises his hand passing it slightly over his forehead, again and again. [26 (p. 8)].

I do not deny that Shawqi was a product of his time, and he was very mature linguistically, and I believe that this maturity gave his poetry a splendor and majesty not found in the poetry of other poets of his time. He was also hardworking and very productive, especially in his later days. The effect of this diligence is evident in his maintaining his position and fame. When he felt that his poems were no longer sufficient to maintain his position, he turned to writing theatrical novels. He composed a number of these, which exhausted him. The great effort and patience required proved difficult for him as he advanced in age and his health worsened. This effort undoubtedly indicated a strong vitality in itself [34 (p.677)].

The following is part of Khalil Mutran's poem at the inauguration ceremony of Shawqi as Prince of Poets in the Grand Festival at the Royal Opera House in Cairo in his honor in 1927. The whole poem (of 119 lines), is in the poetry collection of Shakib Arslan:

قيسُ بدا من جانبِ الصحراء هل عاد عهدُ الوحي في سِيناء؟
يا مصرُ باهي كُلَّ مصرٍ بالأولى أَنْجَبْتَ مِنْ أُنْبَائِكَ الْعُظَمَاءِ
حَفَلُوا لِأَحْمَدَ حَفْلَةً مَيْمُونَةً لَمْ تَأْتِ فِي نَبَأٍ مِنَ الْأَنْبَاءِ
مَا أَحْمَدُ إِلَّا لِوَاءِ بِلَادِهِ فِي الشَّرْقِ يَخْفُقُ فَوْقَ كُلِّ لَوَاءِ
عَظُمَتْ مَوَاهِبُهُ وَأَحْرَزَ مَا اسْتَهَى مِنْ فِطْنَةٍ خَلَابَةٍ وَذَكَاءِ
إِنْ تَلَقَّاهُ تَلَقَّ النَّبُوءُ مُمْتَلَأً فِي صُورَةٍ لَمَّاحَةٍ اللَّالَاءِ
رَأَى الْخَيَالَ جَمَالَهَا بِسَمَائِهِ وَأَعَارَهَا قَسَمَاتِهِ لِبَقَاءِ
فِي كُلِّ فَنٍّ مِنْ فُنُونٍ قَرِيضِهِ مَا زَالَ فَوْقَ مَطَامِعِ النُّظَرَاءِ
أَمَّا جَزَالَتُهُ فَعَايَهُ مَا انْتَهَتْ شَرَفًا إِلَيْهِ جَزَالَةُ الْفُصَحَاءِ
وَتَكَادُ رَقَّتُهُ تَسِيلُ بِلَفْظِهِ فِي الْمُهْجَةِ الظَّمْأَى مَسِيلَ الْمَاءِ
بَلَعَتْ خِلَالَ الْعَبَقْرِ يَتَمَهَا فِيهِ وَجَارَتْ شَأْوُ كُلِّ ثَنَاءِ
يَا مَنْ صَفَا لِي وَدُّهُ وَصَفَا لَهُ وَدِّي عَلَى السَّرَاءِ وَالضَّرَاءِ

A light appeared from the side of the desert,

Did the era of revelation return in Sinai?

Oh Egypt, show off over every country,
With your great sons to whom you have given birth to.

They gave Ahmad an auspicious party,
Of which no similar had never been reported in the news.

Ahmad is nothing but the banner of his country,
in the East, rising above every banner.

His talents were great and he achieved,
the amazing acumen and intelligence he desired.

If you meet it, you will meet genius represented,
in the form of a glimpse of pearls.

Imagination adorned its beauty with its features,
and lent it its features for survival.

In every art of his poetry,
he still exceeds the ambitions of his counterparts.

As for his eloquence, it reached the peak,
Which the eloquent reached with honor.

His gentleness almost makes his words flow,
in a thirsty heart, like water.

Through the genius, it reached its completion, in him,
and was rewarded with every praise.

O He whose affection became pure to me,
and my affection pure to him, in joy and sorrow.

Mutran Eulogises Shawqi:

In 1932, Ahmad Shawqi died, and Khalil Mutran wrote a poem of 108 lines in his eulogy, beginning with the following:

عجباً أتوحشني وأنت إزائي وضياء وجهك مالى سودائي؟
لكنه حق وإن أبنت المني أنا تفرقنا لغير لقاء
لك في قريضك خطّة أثرتها عزّت على الفصحاء والبلغاء
من أي بحر درّه متصبّد وسناه من تنزيل أيّ سماء؟
شعرٌ سرى مسرى النسيم بلطفه وصفا بروعه صفاء الماء

I wonder, how I miss you while you are next to me,
And the light of your face fills of blackness?

But it is true even if wish refuses,
We parted with no more meeting.

You had a plan that you chose in your poetry,
Which could not be for the eloquent and expressive.

From which sea did you catch its pearls?
And from which heaven did its splendor descend?

Poetry that passed like the breeze with its kindness,
Clear, like water in its clarity.

Mustafa Kamel (1874-1908)

Mustafa Kamel Pasha was an Egyptian political leader and writer who founded the National Party and *Al-Liwaa'* newspaper. He was one of the greatest opponents of colonialism and was known for his major role in areas of the renaissance, such as promoting education and establishing the National University. His party called for a closer bond with the Ottoman Empire. His efforts led to exposing and denouncing the crimes of the occupation in international forums, especially after the Denshawai massacre, which led to the fall of Lord Cromer, the British High Commissioner in Egypt.

Kamel trained as a lawyer at the French Faculty of Law in Cairo and the Faculty of Law at the University of Toulouse, France. In January 1893, he became famous for leading a group of students who destroyed the offices of the *Mokattam* newspaper, which supported the British occupation of Egypt. An ardent nationalist, he was a supporter of Khedive Abbas Hilmi II, who strongly opposed the British occupation. He died at the age of 34. His death caused great public grief, and his funeral was attended by hundreds of thousands who considered Kamel their hero.

Lord Cromer had advised the Khedive to stay away from Ali Yusuf, Mustafa Kamel and Ahmad Shawqi. The representative of the occupation was afraid of Kamel's fiery speeches and of Shawqi's far-reaching poetry influence, and he realised that the connection between the leader and the poet could only be severed by death, as their connection dated back to the days of attending university in France and the formation of the National Assembly there.

When Shawqi travelled to France sponsored by Khedive Tawfiq, that first study trip determined Shawqi's intellectual and creative beginnings. During that time, he participated with the mission's colleagues in forming the Egyptian Progress Association, one of the organizations of national action against the English occupation. At that time, he developed a close friendship with leader Mustafa Kamel and became open to Egyptian renaissance projects.

For this reason, Mustafa Kamel dedicated his play to his uncle (Ali Shawqi), the father of his friend, Ahmad Shawqi. The poet and the leader were both fanatical about the principles of the National Party. Rather, each of them completed the party's slogan. When Kamel stated, 'There is no life with despair', the poet completed the saying adding, 'And there is no despair with life'. When the connection between the Khedive and Kamel was severed, it was not severed between him and Shawqi, and if some writers accused Shawqi of being late in eulogising his friend when he died, in reality he began composing it on the same day that Kamel died. He completed it a

few days later and published it 12 days after the death of Mustafa Kamel, when the effect of the shock that froze the pen in his hand and the tears in his eyes began to wear off, but in fact, he did not lament a national leader, but rather a friend. [2, (p.92)]

Judge Yahya Al-Turki commented on Kamel's last speech: 'This is a great victory for your principles, and people are receiving you everywhere with joy, cheers and welcome'. Kamel responded, 'I don't think people gathered for that. They had previously gathered and applauded and cheered for my victory in the Dinshway incident'. Shawqi agreed, stating that this is another victory. Kamel then stated, 'No, but perhaps people gathered to hold my funeral, because I feel like I am going to die'. Then he turned to Shawqi and asked, 'You are going to mourn me, right?'

His illness intensified and Mustafa Kamel died at four o'clock in the afternoon on Monday, 10 February 1908. Al-Rafi'i stated, 'The tragic news spread with lightning speed in the capital and the regions, and the celebration of his funeral, February 11, was a memorable day in the history of the national movement'. He added, 'The poems of poets, writers, and authors were full of elegies coming from the depths of the heart, and among the literary figures who eulogised him was Shawqi, the Prince of Poets, who was one of his dearest friends, the one who admired him the most, and was deeply saddened by him'. Al-Rafi'i added, 'Shawqi was a close friend to Mustafa Kamel, and they both greatly admired each other'. Mustafa described Shawqi's poetry as 'a clear stream in the thickets of the jungle, watering the earth, but the onlookers do not see it', and confirmed that Shawqi visited him during his last rest.

Al-Liwa newspaper published Shawqi's elegy entitled 'Life in Death', on 23 February 1908, 13 days after Mustafa Kamel's death. So how was this poem born that 'had a profound effect on souls and renewed the nation's sorrows?' as Al-Rafi'i described it.

When Egypt was saddened by the death of Mustafa Kamel, Shawqi eulogised him with a long poem. Shawqi loved Mustafa Kamel and knew him well. Kamel described Shawqi's poetry as a 'pure stream in the thickets of the jungle', and he assigned Shawqi's poems to the highest place in the *Al-Liwa* newspaper.

Please refer to my research, *Denshawai and Cromer in the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi*, in which I translated 43 lines of the 64-line elegy poem that Shawqi wrote for his intimate friend, the national leader, Mustafa Kamel.

When Kamel died in 1908, Shawqi eulogised him with his immortal poem, which is considered the largest elegy in the history of Arabic literature. In it, he expressed sadness and pain with the wisdom of poetry, the strength of patriotism and the splendor of statement [14].

Muhammad Kurd Ali (1876-1953)

Born in Damascus in 1876, Kurd Ali was a Syrian thinker, a man of thought, literature, righteousness and a defender of the Arabic language. He was the first Minister of Education in Syria and the head of the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus from its establishment in 1919 until his death in 1953. He grew up in a noble family, to a Kurdish father and a Circassian mother. He learned reading, writing and the Holy Quran in school, and attended middle school at the Rushdieh School. He completed his secondary education at the Lazarist School for the Lazarist Nuns in Damascus. Then he moved to the Rushdieh School (secondary) where he

studied Turkish and French. During this period, he was drawn to reading and perusing newspapers.

Kurd Ali travelled to Cairo and established the monthly magazine *Al-Muqtabas* in which he published scientific, literary and historical research. He also edited the daily newspaper *Al-Thaher*. When it was closed, Sheikh Ali Youssef, the owner of *Al-Muayyad* newspaper - which was at that time the largest newspaper in the Islamic world - invited him to edit it. He worked there until 1908, when he left Cairo for Damascus after the Ottoman coup there. He was the first to establish an Arab scientific academy, which was the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus, followed by other academies in a number of Arab countries.

Muhammad Kurd Ali said about his friend Ahmad Shawqi:

‘This is Shawqi; hundreds of young men like him enter schools and enjoy a good life. Their families take care of their upbringing. They associate with the highest classes. The world provides them with a livelihood and they are honored by ranks, positions, and medals. But they do not excel like Shawqi, nor do his work, nor will they be immortal like him. This is because The Almighty Creator deposited in him a secret that no other Arab person had had, and he created him as a poet who gathered the tools of poetry and achieved the reasons for its virtues, with his wonderful imagination and wonderful rhetoric’ [26 (p. 428)].

‘Shawqi protected his poetry from abandonment and satire, and this was considered one of his glories. He did not try to fight injustice directly, nor did he confront the enemies of society directly. If his intention to strike an arrow in this type of poetry had been true, he would indeed have hurt them desperately’ [26 (pp.430-431)].

There is a strange phenomenon in Shawqi’s poetry, which is that he remained proficient during his old age, and continued to create as he had done in his middle age and youth. It is customary for a poet to stop reciting poetry in old age, but the genius of Arabic poetry was like some of the long-lived French poets, such as Kitty and Hugo, who reached an advanced age and continued to produce beautiful literature, and the stages of the years they passed did not hinder them from mastery. Rather, it was as if old age opened every closed door of poetry before them, and composing it became a second nature, and when they grew older, they knew how to bring it to levels of precision and eloquence [34 (p. 158)].

Excerpts from Kurd Ali’s *The Bereavement of the Arabs in Shawqi* are provided in the following passages.

One of the beauties of his obedient intuition is what I witnessed from him on the night he was honored by the Arab Scientific Academy in Damascus. He composed a poem and then abandoned it because he was not satisfied. He immediately composed another one in the presence of his friends at the house of Fakhri al-Baroudi. Those who knew poetry unanimously agreed that Damascus had never been praised with such a tribute as that given by the poet, influenced by both its past and its present. He cried as did others in attendance. His poem about the revolution with which he addressed Damascus, and his poems about Lebanon, all melted with sweetness and smoothness and have spread throughout the countries.

Whoever examines his widely published poetry will be certain that Shawqi loved the Levant as he loved Egypt, loved the Turks as he loved the Arabs, was sympathetic to Christians as he was to Muslims, admired Western civilisation as he admired Arab civilisation, had compassion for man and humanity, called in moderation for perfection, and always repeated the memory of Islam and Muslims. A beautiful touch of this meaning is evident in most of his poems and appeals to the interests of both private and public audiences [35].

Ali Al-Jarim (1881-1949)

Ali Al-Jarim was a linguist, poet and writer who was born in 1881 in Egypt. He completed his secondary education in Cairo, after which he travelled to England to complete his studies and then returned to Egypt and held positions of an educational nature. He was appointed to the position of chief inspector of the Arabic language and later appointed deputy of Dar Al-Ulum and remained there until 1924. He was also chosen as a member of the Arabic Language Academy, and he participated in many scientific and cultural conferences.

In his book, *Jaremiyat*, Al-Jarim states that Shawqi mounted the peak of glory due to the innate talents that God had given him as well as his morals, richness, prestige, contact with princes and great people, vast wealth, leisure and serenity. For these reasons, he held the scepter of poetry until he died.

Shawqi was a highly educated person with a full embodiment of what he read and studied from Arab literature and the language of the Arabs, Frank literature, and the language of the Franks. In addition, he had memorised much of the histories of nations, and the events of the world in its various stages. This filled his poetry with historical evidence, wisdom, proverbs, masterful descriptions, ingenuity, effective beginnings and beautiful impact.

Al-Jarim believed that Shawqi's most prominent characteristic was his submission to the Exalted Creator, contentment with His judgment, and reassurance about His decree and destiny which provided him with peace of mind, tranquility of heart, and peace of conscience. 'I sensed all this in my conversations with him, and from my friendship with him; I learned from him the secret in this overflowing fountain, which God bestowed upon him' [31 (p. 46)].

God gave Shawqi the characteristics of most distinguished poets and masters of rhetoric. Instinct enabled him to have a wonderful, creative imagination that penetrated areas whose doors had been locked to many who preceded him. His study and readiness granted him a clear and pure language that he held in his hands like a plump branch, which he could twist as he pleased and use for his purposes. With a sober Quraysh style that was free of the taint of foreignness, and escaping the fluidity of civilisation and the turmoil of the latecomers, God endowed him with a penetrating mind and a conscious memory that brought together meanings and ideas, making connections between similarities, and understanding the differences between opposites and similarities [31 (p. 348)].

Excerpts of Al-Jarim's article, 'My friend Ahmad Shawqi':

'I knew Shawqi when my eyes opened to read poetry. I knew him and befriended him despite the distance between us in homes and horizons. I knew him as a boy whose name was not found except in the birth register, while he was Shawqi the unique knowledgeable scholar in Egypt, and as the palace's poet whose name filled the ears of time. I knew him through his poetry, and

studied the inner motions of his self as he used to reveal them in his tongue or keep them held within his chest’.

Al-Jarim continued to describe his career as a professor at Dar al-Ulum, devoted to poetry lessons, books, and papers, but stated that poetry ‘came around one night and whispered a poem in my ear’. *Al-Ahram* newspaper published the poem, and people admired it, and his name began to be recognized. It was not long before he met Shawqi in one of Cairo’s forums, and they met again after he had become familiar with Shawqi’s poetry. He studied the poet’s emotions and the methods of his art. Shawqi welcomed him, and the bonds of affection connected them, and the meetings continued. ‘I understood the man’s soul, and I studied the poet’s emotions and the methods of his art’.

Shawqi was extremely modest, pure hearted, openhanded, sentimental, and charitable. He was reticent and remained mostly silent, according to Al-Jarim, who indicated that Shawqi was most probably composing poetry while sitting with his friends. He was content to say a word or two, and then he turned away to the poem on which he was working. Al -Jarim describes one day in which they were roaming in a car around Zamaleki Island when he turned away from me and engaged himself for a long time, making me feel ill at ease for accompanying him. Suddenly Shawqi turned to him and asked a strange linguistic question, strange question because its answer would be known by someone like Shawqi. Al-Jarim laughed, knowing that Shawqi had wanted to compliment him. Shawqi was deeply established in language and its usages and he did not take it from dictionaries but rather from good poetry and prose. To trace this in his poetry and to evidence it, it would take a long time.

When Shawqi returned from Spain, their affection grew stronger. When Al-Jarim’s older brother came to Cairo and insisted on seeing Shawqi, they went to his house in Ain Shams. Shawqi was generous in his warmth. They had hardly settled in when his brother started asking Shawqi about poems he had written long ago, and asked him to recite them for him. Shawqi was not a good at this, and he had not memorised any of his poems, but his brother, would not let Shawqi without hearing his poetry, so he rushed to recite his poems to him in a loud voice, and explained some of their verses to him. Shawqi was pleased to have narrators who were more careful about his poetry than he was.

On this night, a variety of topics circulated. Al-Jarim knew that Shawqi had strong faith in God and great hope in His mercy, and that he hated philosophy in religion and wanted it pure and innate as it was revealed to prophet Muhammad bin Abdullah. He possessed a tolerant religious nature that repelled intolerance, rigidity and narrow-mindedness. He loved the family of the Messenger with a love that was close to Shiism and believes in fate and destiny, the faith of old women.

When Egyptian writers and poets intended to hold a memorial service for Ismail Sabry, Shawqi composed a poem for his eulogy. Hesitantly, he asked Al-Jarim to recite the poem, and he gladly accepted. Shawqi was delighted at the delivery, and Al-Jarim never hesitated to agree to his requests after that [31 (pp. 380-383)].

Al-Jarim stated, ‘Shawqi grew up with all the tools of brilliance and genius. He had a poetic instinct that challenges the like, a brilliant and penetrating intelligence, and superior ethics.

Despite Shawqi's specialty in the palace, the masses of writers and intellectuals eagerly awaited his poetry and snatched up newspapers when his poems were published. They studied and memorised them, and sang them in the fields during night gatherings. Yes, the poetry of occasions can be dull and boring, but Shawqi was able, despite the repetition of the subject, to make each poem a bouquet of different flowers, multi-colored, containing poetry, describing, calling to glory, and containing new literature and great wisdom.

Shawqi remained restricted to these few purposes for the duration of his contact with the palace, because his official position prevented him from talking about what people were talking about, and exclaiming like the poet Hafeth and other poets. In fact, his poetic power was inoperative, and his artistic genius was suppressed, and he did not find an outlet for it. When his connections with the palace were cut off and he became free, he chirped over every branch, circled around every garden, and expressed what was going on in every soul.

'Shawqi sang freely, dazzling Egypt and dazzling the East, and his name filled mouths and ears. He lost his position, so poetry gave him an eternal position, and he lost contact with the prince, so he became a prince of poetry and rhetoric'.

'As for Shawqi's style, it is solid by nature. It does not require refinement and mastery, and it comes out well polished, even if its goals are sometimes hidden, crowding out its meanings and the distance of its imagination. Shawqi was meticulous in choosing the meters of his poetry to match his purpose'. [31 (pp. 406-408)].

The following are some lines from a long poem that Al-Jarim wrote as an elegy for Shawqi:

مَاتَ شَوْقِي وَكَانَ أَنْفَذَ سَهْمٍ * صَائِبِ الرَّمْيِ مِنْ سِهَامِ الْكَنَانَةِ
 إِنَّكَ لِلشَّمْسِ فِي السَّمَاءِ أَخَاهَا * وَأَبْنَى لِلدَّهْرِ قَلْبُهُ وَلِسَانُهُ
 شِعْرُهُ حِكْمَةٌ وَصِدْقُ خَيَالٍ * وَجَمَالٌ وَرَوْعَةٌ وَرِصَانُهُ
 وَرَأَيْنَا بِكُلِّ أَفْقٍ رَيْنِيَا * رَدَدْتَهُ الْقَصَائِدُ الرَّثَائِيَّةُ
 هَكَذَا كُلُّ مَنْ يُرِيدُ خُلُودًا * يَجْعَلُ الْكُؤْنَ كُلَّهُ مِيدَانَهُ
 هَكَذَا فَلْيَسِرْ إِلَى الْمَجْدِ مَنْ شَاءَ * وَيَرْفَعْ بِذِكْرِهِ أَوْطَانَهُ
 مَلِكُ الدِّينِ قَلْبُهُ وَهَوَاهُ * وَجَلَّ الشَّعْرُ سَاطِعًا إِيْمَانَهُ
 طَوَفَتْ حَوْلَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ الطُّهْرُ * وَمَسَّتْ بِطَبِيبِهَا أَكْفَانَهُ
 أَيُّهَا الرَّاجِلُ الْكَرِيمُ لَقَدْ كُنْتَ * سَوَادَ الْعُيُونِ أَوْ إِنْسَانَهُ
 نَمَّ قَرِيرًا فِي جَنَّةِ الْخُلْدِ وَانْعَمَ * بِرِضَا اللَّهِ وَاعْتَنَمَ غُفْرَانَهُ

Shawqi died and he was the most penetrant arrow,
 the rightest of the arrows of the Kananah (Egypt).

Mourn for the sun in the sky, its brother,
 And mourn for eon, its heart and its tongue.

His poetry is wisdom, sincere imagination,
 beauty, splendor, and sobriety.

We saw a resonance in every horizon,
 echoed by resonant poems.

Thus, everyone who desires immortality,
makes the entire universe his field.

Thus, let whomever wishes march to glory,
exalt his countries with his remembrance.

Religion took possession of his heart and his love,
and his poetry was radiant, shining through his faith.

The pure angels circled around him,
and touched his shrouds with their perfume.

O honorable departed, you were,
the blackness of the eyes or its pupil.

Sleep soundly in the paradise of eternity and enjoy,
God's satisfaction and take advantage of His forgiveness.

Mahjoub Thabet (1884-1945)

Mahjoub Thabet was an Egyptian physician, politician and writer, with rhetorical positions. He was born in Dongola in Sudan. His father Thabit immigrated to Cairo in 1884, the year Mahjoub was born. Mahjoub travelled and completed his medical studies in Paris and Geneva, and mastered the French language. He worked in the Egyptian Renaissance with Sa'ad Zaghloul, and was one of the orators of the revolution (1919) and was ultimately exiled. He became a member of the Egyptian House of Representatives. He was appointed a professor of forensic medicine at the university, and later became its chief physician. He died in Cairo [36 (p.283)].

Dr Mahjoub Thabet was one of the loyalists of the leader Sa'ad Zaghloul, and he filled Cairo with joy and amusement. The man was short in stature, with a dignified beard and a pipe that never left his lips. The historical car is difficult to ride to the extent that you cannot enter it and sit on its seats except by jumping, as if it were an armored car of a military commander. The Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, spoke about this car in a well-known poem. It suffices that Shawqi allocated a part of *Shawqiyyat*, naming it 'Mahjoubiyat' after Mahjoub Thabet, the socialist leader, member of the House of Representatives, and physician of Cairo University [37 (p. 49)], Shawqi was unique in his time among poets in the Arab world for his elegies and his brotherhoods in general. In the field of polite indecency, he had a unique style that no poet had ever possessed. He rose, even in these dalliances that he was composing, to the level of serious poetry committed to all its characteristics and essentials, as if he were composing it for the noblest and most important purpose. That is a characteristic that accompanies geniuses who cannot, even if they wanted to, abandon their obligations to which they adhere and obey. His son Hussein said, 'My father tended to be cheerful in his private gatherings, and he had funny friends, such as Muhammad Al-Babli, Dr. Mahjoub Thabet and Abdul Aziz Al-Bishri'. He had much poetic banter with Dr Mahjoub and some of his friends and relatives.

Dr. Mahjoub was a companion in gatherings, the friend of society and the beloved of friends and enemies. Whoever reads the fourth part of Shawqi's poetry collection (*Al-Shawqiyyat*) will find

a special section entitled *Mahjoubiyat*, which contains poetic jokes with a humourous character, composed by Shawqi about his friend, Dr Mahjoub Thabet.

Poet Hafeth Ibrahim asked his friend Mahjoub about the reason for his reluctance to marry, and he responded, 'So that I do not give birth to slaves for the English' [38].

Shawqi Deif stated that the Prince of Poets' jokes with Dr Mahjoub Thabet seemed to us closer to success in providing evidence or witness that Shawqi was not serious and a rigid poet in all circumstances. Rather, he laughed and worked to make others laugh, as evidenced or attested by these four pieces found at the end of the (fourth) collection of *Shawqiyat*: 'Between Maxwini and the Automobile', 'Maxwini', 'Treasure' and 'Mahjoub's Fleas' [19 (p.118)].

'Mahjoubiyat':

In Ahmad Shawqi's collection of poems, there is a section called 'Mahjoubiyat' in which he published the humourous, satirical poems that he used to tease his friend, Mahjoub Thabet. The title of the first of these poems is 'Between McSweeney and the Automobile', in which Shawqi refers to a horse that Dr Mahjoub used to ride in Cairo's neighbourhoods at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Dr Mahjoub Thabet (1884-1945) was the subject of many jokes and journalistic laughter. In addition to his vast knowledge, he was distinguished by his spirit and humour. Dr Mahjoub Thabet had a horse that he rode around Cairo during the revolution. His friends called his horse Maxwini or McSweeney, the name of a famous Irish horse that committed suicide by starvation, referring to the horse's thinness, hunger, and lack of care. Dr Mahjoub replaced Maxwini with a car, so the Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, composed this poem in 1924, teasing Dr Mahjoub and consoling his horse [24 (p. 97)].

Brotherly Pleasantries:

The last section of *Al-Shawqiyat* includes the anecdotes from Ahmad Shawqi, regarding his friend, Dr Thabet. Mahjoubiyat are the poems that Ahmad Shawqi dedicated to his friend Dr Thabet.

Shawqi was unique, distinguished by his delicate sense, in his brotherly relations, sweet words, charming jokes, and polished manners and refined licentiousness. His jokes also revealed experiences he had with the doctor, one of his close companions, as well as others with whom he found enjoyment in their company. His interactions were crowded with all kinds of conversations, from politics to economics to literature to history.

As previously mentioned, Dr Thabet had a carriage pulled by a thin horse, which he would ride through the neighbourhoods of Cairo during the 1919 revolution. When Dr Mahgoub replaced his horse with an Overland car, it inspired Shawqi to write a poem in which he teased his friend Mahgoub, and tried to offer his condolences to the loyal horse, crying over the loss of loyalty among people. In this poem, Shawqi wrote:

لَكُمْ فِي الْخَطِّ سَيَّارَهْ حَدِيثُ الْجَارِ وَالْجَارَهْ
إِذَا حَرَكَهَا مَالَتْ عَلَى الْجَنَّبَيْنِ مِنْهَا
وَقَدْ تَحَرَّنُ أحياناً وَتَمْشِي وَحدها تَارَهْ

وَلَا تُشْبِعُهَا عَيْنٌ مِنَ الْبَنَزِينَ فَوَّارَهُ
تَرَى الشَّارِعَ فِي دُعْرِ إِذَا لَاحَتْ مِنَ الْحَارِهِ
وَصَبِياناً يَصْجُونَ كَمَا يَلْقَوْنَ طَيَّارَهُ
فَقَدْ تَمَشَّى مَتَى شَاءَتْ وَقَدْ تَرَجَّعَ مُخْتَارَهُ
أَدْنِيَا الْخَيْلِ يَا مَكْسِي كَدُنْيَا النَّاسِ غَدَّارَهُ
أَحَقُّ أَنْ مَحْجُوباً سَلَا عَنْكَ بِفَخَّارَهُ
فَإِنَّ الْحَظَّ جَوَّالٌ وَإِنَّ الْأَرْضَ دَوَّارَهُ

You have on the line a car,
Which is the talk of all the neighbours.

If you move it, it leans,
on both sides, collapsing.

And it may sometimes refuse to,
At other times it walks alone.

And no spring of sparkling gasoline,
will satisfy it.

You see the street in panic,
when it appears from the alley.

And boys making noise,
as if they meet a plane.

For it may walk whenever it wants,
and it may return as it chooses.

The world of horses, O Maxi,
is like the world of people, treacherous.

Is it true that Mahjoub forgot you,
Because of a pottery?

For luck is a wanderer,
and the earth is rotating. [1 (pp. 52, 55)]

Shawqi spent many evenings at Thabet's clinic in the Sayeda Zeinab area, staying until late at night. The beautiful evening would include some hymns by the singer Mohamed Abdul-Wahab. It happened that Shawqi stopped visiting without prior warning, so Dr Thabet called him on the phone to inquire about his absence. Shawqi explained that he did not want to return to the clinic after suffering from the fleas that were pervasive in the clinic. Thabet claimed that Shawqi had brought the fleas with him in his car and that they were not the product of the clinic. The discussion between the two parties heated up and continued for a long time. Finally, the two parties agreed to meet with Dawoud Barakat, the editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram*, and they met with him at the Al-Liwaa Café.

A funny debate took place between Shawqi and Thabet, and Shawqi appeared in front of the people the next day with a poem from which we quote the following verses:

براغيث محجوب لم أنسها ولم أنس ما طعمت من دمي
تشق خراطيمها جوربي وتنفذ في اللحم والأعظم
ترحب بالضيف فوق الطريق , فباب العيادة , فالسلم

Mahjoub's fleas I have not forgotten,
nor have I forgotten what they tasted of my blood.

Their trunks tear my sock,
and penetrate the flesh and bones.

They welcome the guest on the road,
at the clinic door, and on the stairs. [24 (p. 98)].

Shawqi did not miss an opportunity to tease Dr Thabet, once he learned that Mahjoub had deposited 2,000 Egyptian pounds in the bank of Hassan Pasha Sa'eed, so he wrote:

قل لابن سينا: لا طبيب اليوم إلا الدرهم
هو قبل بقراط وقبلك للجراحة مزمهم
والناس منذ كانوا عليه دائرون وحوم
وبسخره تعلو الأسافل في العيون وتعظم
يا هل ترى الألفان وقف لا يؤمس ومحرم؟!
بنك السعيد عليهما حتى القيامة قيم

Tell Ibn Sina (Avicenna): There is no doctor today except the dirham (penny).
It was before 'Hippocrates' and before you, an ointment for surgery.
Since ever people were, they circled and hovered around it.
With its magic the lowest rise in the eyes and become great.
Are the two thousand are an endowment that cannot be touched?
The Sa'eed bank is its guarantor until the Day of Judgment.

Ahmad Hassan Al-Zayyat (1885-1968)

Ahmad Hassan Al-Zayyat was one of the most prominent men of the cultural renaissance in Egypt and the Arab world, and the founder of Al-Resala magazine. He was a member of the linguistic academies in Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad.

Concerning the uniqueness of Shawqi, Ahmad Al-Zayat, owner of Al-Risala, stated: 'Critics almost agree that Shawqi was a fair compensation for the ten centuries that passed in the history of the Arabs after Al-Mutanabi, in which no talented poet appeared to connect what had been cut off from the inspiration of poetry and renewed what had been studied in the approach to literature' [39].

Shawqi was chosen for the message of poetry after a period of despair. He was favoured with the fullest share of thought, imagination and emotion, three faculties that support the intellect and extend the nature. In their differences in strength and weakness, the artist varies. He was

provided with a musical ear, a generous intellect and the tool of flexibility. He grew up a genius by nature, with no role for the environment in his upbringing, guidance, or school in his preparation. Rather, his example in the message of poetry was like the example of the prophets in the message of religion; God chose them from among the weak, the poor and the illiterate so that His glory would be more dazzling over them, and His miracles would be more evident in them, and His argument from them would be more eloquent.

Al-Zayyat stated, 'Shawqi is a man whose spirit is stronger than his art, whose poetry is broader than his knowledge, whose wisdom is more solid than his character, and whose ability is greater than his preparation. His reader has no doubt that he is a mediator for a hidden spirit that guides him, and a messenger for a divine power that inspires him. He has acquired from reading and travel the refinement of taste, the acquisition of material and the expansion of experience. Taste in art, like reason in science, is only acquired through study, experience, and age. Shawqi is entirely a creation. He was born a singer, just as the nightingale was born a warbler. Judging his poetry by the base laws of criticism and the personal opinions of critics does not put him in his place, nor does it weigh him on his scale'

I first met Shawqi in 1927 at a festival held to honor him in Cairo. My friend, Professor Muhammad Kurd Ali, introduced him to me. He had arrived with a delegation of literary figures and Arab notables to participate with Egypt in honoring the great poet. I went to visit him at the Continental Hotel and found him sitting on the balcony wearing a fine necklace with 'Shawqi' written in the middle. When Kurd saw me approaching, he smiled and lifted his head and said to Shawqi, smiling and beaming 'This is the man who has done you justice! When the brilliant poet asked me for my name, Professor Kurd was surprised that we did not know each other, even though we live in the same country and walk the same path. Shawqi greeted me with cheerfulness, thanks, and friendliness. Then, affection strengthened between us for the next two years, after which I travelled to Iraq. During my stay in Baghdad, God chose him to be near Him, and I did not see him after that except in a vision, and I did not imagine him except in memory!

Shawqi took me by the arm and stopped our car at his house (Karmet Ibn Hani). It was a night that sparkled with light and joy, and the house was decorated with flowers and attendees. The people ate whatever they wanted of delicious food and enjoyed the drink. They gathered in groups on the sofas and chairs of the hall, listening to the emerging composer and young singer Mohamed Abdul-Wahab as he sang in his soft euphonic voice (I am Antonio and Antonio is me). Shawqi treated me with special care and talked to me, as you would with a new friend and a modest visitor.

In the evening of the next day, Shawqi sent his luxurious car to take me to his house. When I entered, the house was as quiet as a monastery, as awesome as a temple. Whoever saw it the night before and then saw it in the afternoon today would remember the state of a drunkard who is overwhelmed by wine and becomes wild, and then returns to sleep.

Shawqi was sitting in a corner of the balcony with Hafeth, Abdul-Muttalib and Hanafi Mahmoud at a small table. When I took my place in the gathering, Shawqi said that this situation, due to the difference in age, taste and culture, called for us to read his poem that he had composed for the festival. Hafeth began to read the poem, and we stopped at each verse, looking at its context

and music, and then we reflected on its meanings and words. Perhaps we replaced one word with another, or preferred one phrase over another, while the brilliant poet, criticised, balanced, compared and chose, until the poem was aligned with his expectations for high art, with its words arranged in a pure and refined manner.

Shawqi and I met again after that day, once at his house, and many times in Solt. Whenever he composed one of his masterpieces, he would recite it to me; and that continued throughout his life: he would present what he composed to different ears and minds, so that he might know its place in every taste and its effect on every soul. What most enabled the intimacy between us was our similar nature, in terms of extreme shyness, love of solitude, little talk, and contraction in generous hospitality, and our avoidance of the general celebration. It was as if each of us saw in the other a consolation for his shortcomings and a compensation for his deprivations [23].

'Shawqi is conservative in his religion, language, and art. He often repeats the names of the prophets, caliphs, revealed books, and holy places due to the simplicity of his religion and the strength of its certainty' [40 (p.110)].

To summarise, Shawqi is a non-competitive poet of the Nile. He was provided us with what no one else has: the soundness of nature, the sweetness of the soul, the energy of feeling, the fluency of intuition, the generosity of upbringing, the breadth of culture, and the bliss of life. He excelled in expressing the feelings of souls, the whims of the mind, the talks of hope, and the meanings of lessons, with a smooth expression and a pure style, so his poetry touched our hearts, his remembrance travelled on the tongues, and his influence on the language was great, renewing its eloquence, strengthening its structure and pouring into poetry and feelings the beauty of his soul and the joy of nature, life, growth, splendor and strength. [40 (p. 114)].

Is'aaf Al-Nashasheebi (1948-1885)

Muhammad I'saaf Al-Nashashibi was born in Jerusalem and joined the Quds (Jerusalem) traditional school, studying linguistics and literary sciences. After that, he joined Dar Al-Hekma School in Beirut. He had a good command of French, and was a member of the Arabic Language Academy in Damascus. He was the author of 14 books. Al-Nashashibi was one of Shawqi's best friends. He wrote a famous book, *The Immortal Hero Saladin al-Ayyubi and the Immortal Poet Ahmad Shawqi*. In tribute to Shawqi he also wrote a lengthy elegy, which included the following lines:

يا فتاة العرب *** شاعر العرب قضى
فالبسى ثوب الحداد *** واندي بين الملا
زحزحي هذا النقاب *** لنرى وجه الحزين
شيعي دمعك هذا *** بنحيب ونشيج وعويل
وابذلي الدمع رخيصة *** إن من تبكين غالي
وذري التراب بييسا *** يرتوي من عيرات
بلبل الكرمة ولى *** أين غاب البليل
غادر الطير تكالى *** في حنين وأنين وشجن
زهر (الكرمة) يبكي *** بدموع ظاهرات في الصباح
بهجة زالت وجاءت وحشة *** وعرا الكرمة حزن لا يريم
عبقري الشعر ولى *** فالبسى ثوب الحداد
طرفة الدهر التي صن بها *** ألف حول ثم جاد

لا شكسبير ولا دانتي ولا *** غوته قد فضلوه
 كم من اهرام رست ثم عفت *** وكلام عبقري لن يبيد
 ويكأن الدهر يخشى النابغين *** إنما الدهر خصيم العبقري.

Oh, girl of the Arabs, the poet of the Arabs has died,
 So, wear mourning clothes and mourn in the crowd.
 Pull off this veil to show the sad face,
 Shed these tears of yours with crying, sobbing, and wailing.
 Shed your tears cheaply, the one you cry for is precious,
 let the dry seed of the soil be quenched by your tears.
 The nightingale of the vine is gone. Where did he disappear?
 The birds left bereaved, in longing, anguish, and grief,
 The vine blossoms cry with perceptible tears in the morning.
 Joy has departed, and desolation has come,
 flowers of the vine weep in unforgiving sorrow.
 The genius of poetry has passed away,
 so, wear the mourning clothes.
 The masterpiece that time spared,
 for thousand years, then granted.
 Neither Shakespeare, nor Dante, nor Goethe favoured him.
 How many pyramids have been anchored and then deserted,
 while the words of genius will not be wiped out.
 It is as if time fears the brilliant ones,
 But time is the opponent of genius [26 (pp. 513-517)].

Al-Nashashibi also wrote in the eulogy of his friend Ahmad Shawqi:
 Shawqi was an Egyptian genius,
 A poet like whom Egypt has not achieved since its introduction to the Arabic language.
 I participated in the funeral oration of that brotherhood,
 yet this has left me with this sadness for the rest of my life.
 I wish that that sermon had not happened,
 and that I had not visited Egypt at that time (for eulogy celebration),
 and that I had not been one of those participants.

I wish I had not acquired you as a friend.
 An acquisition that brought sorrow to my heart.

How painfully difficult it is that my eyesight left,
 The brilliance of that lighting planet.

When the King of Iraq met with Shawqi, on a ship at sea, he said:
 Egypt is the light of the East, and Shawqi is the light of Egypt.

It is a painful loss to us that this light disappeared,
 Shawqi died and his literature remained in the immortals. [41 (p.54)].

Antoun Al-Jemeyil (1887-1948)

Antoun Al-Jemeyil was a Lebanese writer and journalist who emigrated to Egypt. He served as editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper, and was one of the most prominent men of Arabic literature, politics and journalism in Egypt.

Al-Jemeyil stated, 'I stop at this point in presenting the melodies that Shawqi sent from the poetry harp. If you go back to his poetry collections, you will find a lot of what I was forced to ignore. There is a rich mine of diamonds, and no matter how much we dug from it, we left a lot to others. Shawqi's talent is a generous talent that overflowed with all the events of his time, and returned from it with generous meanings in the silky words by imagining its subject. Then the words meet and it is sweet, harmonious and plated, as if he does not express his thoughts in expression, but rather sings it with song. How many times have we seen those who do not have a taste for poetry enjoy Shawqi's poems?' [12 (364)].

'We have never known any poet for whom necklaces of praise were formulated, and contracts of praise were composed, more than what was formulated and composed for Shawqi. He is called the Prince of Poets, and every poem of his is described as impeccable, and every one of his compositions is considered a shining piece of poetry. His words are the perfect gem, and his meanings are the unique essence. This is how newspapers and narrators describe him' [42 (p.7)].

Zaki Mubarak (1892-1952)

Zaki Abdul-Salam Mubarak (1892-1952) was an Egyptian writer, poet, journalist and academic. He obtained three consecutive doctorate degrees. Two of them were from an Egyptian university and a doctorate in literature was from the Sorbonne University in Paris in 1937. Subsequently, some called him Drs. Zaki Mubarak. The first doctorate was related to ethics according to Al-Ghazali, the second was in artistic prose in the fourth century, which he submitted to the Sorbonne, and the third was on Islamic Sufism. He taught at the Egyptian University and worked as an inspector general for the Arabic language.

Mubarak began his literary life as a revolutionary poet. He plunged into politics with extreme vigor. He was at the forefront of the youth movement in the 1919 revolution, and he became a revolutionary preacher, covering the squares and inflaming the masses, until he fell into the grip of the British, incarcerated him.

In his book, *Ahmad Shawqi*, Zaki Mubarak recalls how he became angry with Shawqi when he composed a poem calling for acceptance of the Milner Project in 1920. Mubarak was still in detention at the time, and when he was released, the first thing he wrote was an article criticising Shawqi. But love comes after hostility, as the saying goes. After subsequent meetings, the reality of Shawqi's soul were revealed to him, and he described him as crazy with poetry, running away from people when he started composing, so that you would only see him wandering from one road to another.

Mubarak believed that this silent, rough-dressed man was the most poetic person of his time, because genius is a hidden secret. He added, 'Do not ask about the secret to the greatness of Shawqi, because poetry is often a divine scent'. Mubarak had a great interest in Shawqi, which was clearly evident in a number of his books and articles. Although their friendship did not last

long, Dr Zaki Mubarak remained fair to Shawqi. He pointed out that his apology for not writing an introduction to *Shawqiyyat* was a reason for their separation. Although Taha Hussein considered Shawqi 'the greatest poet known to Arabic after Al-Mutanabi', Mubarak believed that he was more poetic than Al-Mutanabi.

Mubarak recalled that in 1919 he was the editor-in-chief of *Al-Afkar* newspaper, which was supervised by Abdul Latif Al-Soufani, who visited Shawqi every evening to discuss what he should write in the morning. His house was always crowded with visitors. Sheikh Abdul-Rabbu Miftah asked me, 'Do you know this man sitting there?' I responded that he must be a poor man, to which he replied, 'This is Ahmad Shawqi, the Prince of Poets'.

I went to greet him and said, 'I have three pounds in my pocket and I will give them to you to buy a suit that will relieve you of this shabby one. If you came to beg Al-Soufani, then I am richer than he is, and I am a poet like you, and poets are like the poor They show compassion to one another'.

Shawqi laughed loudly and said, 'This is the first time I have laughed heartily and I would like to have the honor of knowing the professor'. I said, 'I am Sheikh Zaki Mubarak, the King of Poets, and you are a prince in my kingdom, so it is my duty to show compassion to you [15 (pp. 306-307)]'.

In late 1919, the poet returned from exile, and I was eager to see him. I saw him for the first time in the home of the late Abdul Latif Al-Sofani Bey in Al-Hilmeya Al-Gedida. I saw him as a man devoid of pomp and prestige in his dress and appearance, a man of few words and much silence. His appearance indicated nothing, even though his fame spread far and wide. They introduced me to him that day, and I recited to him many of his eloquent poems. He enjoyed being with those who recited his poems and acknowledged his poetic greatness [15 (p.293)].

In 1920, Shawqi composed a poem calling for the acceptance of the Milner project. I read that poem while I was in the pits of detention, so my anger flared up against him, and I decided to hurt him when I found a way to breathe the air of freedom. When I got out of detention in the fall of 1920, the first thing I wrote was an article criticising Shawqi. He became angry and added my name to his bitter opponents, but fate was not what either of us wanted [43 (p. 88)].

After Shawqi returned from exile, he would only publish his poems in *Al-Ahram* newspaper, which called him the undisputed and undefended Prince of Poets. However, he moved to *Al-Seyassa* newspaper when it announced that it would donate 50 pounds to the Islamic Charitable Society every time it published one of Shawqi's poems. With this clever trick by the newspaper, the great poet saw that he had no choice but to dedicate his poems to *Al-Seyassa*. Just as Shawqi moved from *Al-Ahram* to *Al-Seyassa*, *Al-Ahram* changed its description of him, and no longer called him 'the undisputed and undefended Prince of Poets' on every occasion he was mentioned. They began calling him His Excellency Ahmad Bey Shawqi. I noticed this with my old friend Dr Sa'eed Abdu, who was a student in the medical school, so we wrote a reproach to *Al-Ahram* that was published in the morning newspaper.

Shawqi read what we wrote and was delighted by it, and he sent his son Hussein to invite us all to lunch at his house in Matariya. He did not want to make us go through the trouble of moving,

so he made an appointment at one of Cairo's clubs, and came in his luxurious car and took us to Matariya. With us was our friend Ahmad Allam, who later played the role of Majnun Layla in Shawqi's play.

I may forget everything, but I will never forget how Shawqi looked that day. The man was over fifty, yet he still had a sweet, charming smile that enticed and enthralled, and there were still features of brightness on his face that appeared in two dimples that shone on his cheeks. He started talking to us about his old disputes with the leader Sa'ad Zaghloul, and recited verses from his poem that he composed in mockery of Arabi on the day he returned from exile. He rebuked me for the article I published attacking him in *Al-Mahrousa* newspaper, and explained the reasons that led him to compose his poem on Milner's project, saying that it was a response to the insistence of Al-Makabbati and Al-Nahhas.

That day was the beginning of a true friendship between Shawqi and me. The familiarity increased, and we used to meet every day in his office on Jalal Street [15 (pp. 294-295)]

I saw Shawqi for the first time in 1921, as he invited me to lunch at his house in Al-Matareya with the honorable friends Mustafa Al-Qashashi, Sa'eed Abdu, and Ahmad Allam. I was amazed by his charming smile and I wondered what that angel was like in his youth [15 (p. 221)].

After this incident, friendship and love brought together the two poets and writers. Zaki Mubarak was a loyal friend and faithful confidant to Shawqi. You can hardly read a book by Zaki Mubarak without finding traces of his love and loyalty to the great poet. Mubarak remained busy criticising Shawqi and revealing his areas of brilliance and genius. He would not compose a book without mentioning him in it, and he would not write an article without praising him. In his revered books, *Artistic Prose* and *Majnoun Suad* and in his scattered articles in magazines and newspapers, Shawqi remained present and lofty.

Zaki Mubarak, the writer and poet, was the most prominent fan of the Prince of Poets and one of the most ardent admirers of his poetry, and one of the greatest fanatics of his art. He knew him closely and saw in him what he had never seen in any other poet. In describing him, he said, 'He is a new madmen of Layla... his Layla is poetry, and he is mad about poetry. He flees from people when he begins to compose poetry, so you do not see him except wandering aimlessly from one path to another, and in a state that warns of madness'.

When poetry was playing around in the imagination of Ahmad Shawqi, he did not want anyone other than Zaki Mubarak to accompany him on his wandering tours.

One morning, Shawqi was drinking a cup of tea in his office on Jalal Street, and presented his guests with some croissants that were prepared in large quantities, which was one of Shawqi's hobbies. He ate one and served it to his guests. Zaki Mubarak, as was his custom, was sitting with the Prince of Poets who suddenly stood up and took Zaki Mubarak by the hand, and then he left.

The car took them to the Qasr Al-Nile Bridge, where they got out. Shawqi stopped at the bridge's fence and began writing on the back of the cigarette pack the first lines of his new poem. He continued to write the immortal poem, the likes of which had never been written, about the

Nile, which the famous singer Umm Kulthum sang, thereby creating immortality. Suddenly the Prince of Poets collapsed; his legs could no longer carry him. He said to Zaki Mubarak 'Carry me'.

So, like a child, Mubarak carried him and returned him to the car. Mubarak said, 'The Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, is a child, and he is lighter in weight than ostrich feathers. Shawqi was crying like a child and muttering the first lines of his new poem'.

The second time that Zaki Mubarak carried the Prince of Poets was on his shoulder on the day of Shawqi's funeral. Mubarak, Dr Ahmed Zaki Abu Shadi, and some members of the Apollo poetry group, of which Shawqi was the president, came forward and raised the coffin on their shoulders. Mubarak reiterated, 'The coffin of Shawqi was lighter than ostrich feathers' [24 (p. 217)].

Mubarak was one of Shawqi's best friends. The close relationship between them continued until the decisive incident occurred. Their intimate friendship sadly broke up when Shawqi asked him to write the introduction to his poetry collection *Al-Shawqiyat*, as he was then seeking to publish the second edition, and Mubarak agreed to do so. When Shawqi sent him, a copy prepared for printing to write the introduction, Mubarak thought about the consequences of the matter and sent Shawqi a letter in which he apologised for writing this introduction. The reason he gave, which he explicitly mentioned in his letter, was that writing the introduction required kindness and courtesy, and he had devoted his pen to literary criticism.

Thus, the connection between Shawqi and Mubarak was cut off. Four years after the incident, he met Shawqi, by chance, in the lobby of the Continental Hotel. Shawqi asked him about the reason for his turning away from him. All that Mubarak wrote here in response was this phrase: 'I answered him with harsh words.'

That afternoon I wrote a letter of apology. I met Dr Taha Hussein and told him what had happened. He became very angry and said, 'I wish you had consulted me before you did what you did... Don't you know that you lost an opportunity for honor? If Shawqi had asked me, what he asked you to do, and I was his opponent, I would have responded without hesitation, for Shawqi, in my opinion, is the greatest poet the Arabic language has known after Al-Mutanabbi [15].

The relationship between the two men deteriorated after Mubarak apologised for writing the introduction to his poetry collection *Al-Shawqiyat*, so I stopped meeting him in his office in Jalal Street, and he stopped asking about me as well. Tagore, the prince of Indian poets, came and Shawqi held a party for him at his house to which he invited the professors of the Egyptian University, but he ignored my name and did not invite me.

That mistake did not diminish my appreciation for Shawqi the poet. Yet I no longer met Shawqi the friend, except when I came across him by chance. He was the same ascetic and blind soul.

Shawqi deprived me of the opportunity to enjoy Tagore's singing, yet what is Tagore's singing compared to Shawqi's music? Shawqi is the poet of Egypt, and despite his ingratitude, he is a human and a teacher of teachers in the field of poetry; therefore, it is my duty to keep his

covenant until he dies, and he died before hearing a single obscene word from my pen or tongue.

'So, upon you, our great poet, a thousand peaceful greetings, and may God preserve your covenant among the poles of high literature' [15 (p. 36)].

This separation did not distract me from believing in Shawqi's greatness. My sympathy for him increased when I saw him digging his own grave with his own hands. I saw him go to extremes in composing poetry, and poetry draws its fuel from the nerves and senses. I saw him compose a series of theatrical plays in a short time, so I knew that the man was offering his chest to the arrows of death [15 (pp. 295-296)].

I accompanied Shawqi for more than two years and truly got to know the poet. He was a masterpiece of good taste and solid morals. He asked me to write the introduction to *Shawqiyyat*, but I apologised, saying that introductions are meant to be gentle, and I hate to be bound by an opinion that I later will disapprove of when I find a weak poem that requires criticism. Shawqi said in French a sentence that meant 'and I do not impose anything'. In the evening, I met Dr Taha Hussein, who was my neighbour in Heliopolis, and I told him what had happened between me and Shawqi. He frowned and said: It seems that my opinion of you will not change, Dr Zaki, and that is that you are a stupid man. I had quarreled with Shawqi and he quarreled with me while he lavished money on paid writers who cursed me in newspapers and magazines. If he had suggested that I write the introduction to the collection, I would have seen this as an honor, because Shawqi, in my opinion, is the greatest poet in the Arabic language after Al-Mutanabbi.

I responded, 'I think he is more poetic than Al-Mutanabbi'. Dr Taha said: Since this is your opinion, what prevents you from writing the introduction? I said, 'I reserve my right to criticise him when he makes a mistake', to which Dr Taha replied, 'Shawqi does not make mistakes!' [15 (310-311)].

Zaki Mubarak wrote about Shawqi in all of his books. The following are some excerpts of what Mubarak said in his book *Ahmad Shawqi*, about his friend the poet Ahmad Shawqi:

Shawqi and I developed a friendship that lasted for about two years. During those days, I learned things about Shawqi's condition. He is certainly one of the greatest men I have ever known in my life. His mastery in criticising society was proverbial, and his spirit was one of kindness. Shawqi rarely talked about his poetry, and rarely delivered it, but he was entrusted with passing it to someone who had a good understanding of it and a strong ability to perform. Fikri Abatha was Shawqi's favourite to recite his eloquent poetry [15 (p. 8)].

Do not ask about the secret of Shawqi's greatness, because poetry is often from divine inspiration that cannot be attained through diligence and sweat. He is not the most knowledgeable of his contemporaries nor the most intelligent nor the most well-informed of the nature of life and the laws of existence. He expressed this in a most creative way in a poem when he said:

أَنَا أَسْمُو إِلَى نَبَاهَةِ شَانِهِ رُبَّ سَامِي الْبَيَانِ نَبَّهَ شَأْنِي

وَأَذَاعُوا الْجَمِيلَ مِنْ إِحْسَانِهِ إِنَّمَا أَظْهَرُوا يَدَ اللَّهِ عِنْدِي
مِي وَإِنْ عِشْتُ طَائِفًا بِدِينَانِهِ مَا الرَّحِيقُ الَّذِي يَذُوقُونَ مِنْ كَرِّ

Many a lofty speaker has raised my status,
I wish to ascend to the intelligence of his status.

They have only shown the hand of God within me,
and spread the favour of His kindness.

The nectar that they taste is not from my vine,
even if I live wandering around its jugs.

'May God bless you, poet, and have mercy on my parents and yours, for supplication following your poetry is like supplication following prayers'. [15 (p. 9)].

Shawqi's life was one of the reasons for the inactivity of his contemporary poets. Shawqi did what Abu Tammam did, who let 300 poets become inactive in his life [15 (p. 28)]. He meant, of course, that in the brightness of the moon the stars faded, and the public actually forgot many for Shawqi's sake, and only a rare few were able to appear in his time, such as Hafeth and Abd al-Muttalib. However, hundreds of glorious poets actually disappeared. Shawqi's fame overwhelmed them, and he was truly an extraordinary poet.

Shawqi was ordinary in his speech and appearance, but in his poetry, he was a wonder of wonders and proof that the Arabs were excused when they thought poetry was inspired by the devil. I do not remember a time when Shawqi's speech startled me or indicated to me that the man had a mind that was superior to all other minds. His appearance was very simple because he hated elegant dress, and they say that he was fed up with formal clothes, and that he looked amusing when he put on the formal clothes for a reception when introducing some ambassadors.

But is genius a well-groomed garment and a honeyed tongue? The answer is a resounding 'No'. That silent man with rough clothes was the most eloquent man of his time, because genius is a hidden secret.

From that resonant chord that Shawqi was granted, was the impregnable shield with which he repelled the arrows of the spiteful, for raging hurricanes of poisoned criticism rose up against the man, and he stood strong against them like the firm mountains, and he remained so in all circumstances. His fire never faltered, his wing never broke and his bird never fell, even though envious ones did not hesitate - while they were gnawing at his flesh - to throw at him what would break the resolve of most men. And he used the grudges of his opponents as material for his poetry, which may have been among the most beautiful things that his volatile imagination fed on [15 (pp. 249-250)].

Shawqi was enormously fascinated by his children, and he wrote wonderful poetry about them, indicating that the man was a poet of mind, taste, and spirit. He had a strong attachment to his in-laws, reminiscent of the common-sense life in the tents of the Bedouins [15 (p. 251)].

Shawqi was extremely fascinated by his poetry. He did not believe that there was another poet in the world of his caliber, and he made enemies and friends on this basis. It happened that the bonds of friendship between us were strengthened after his return from exile, and our friendship remained in good condition for about three years.

When the summer of 1925 came, he asked me to write an introduction to his poetry collection, *Al-Shawqiyat*, and I accepted. Then I remembered that taste dictates that the introduction be written with some courtesy. This might harm me if I had to criticise his poetry in the future, so I wrote him a letter apologising for writing an introduction to *Al-Shawqiyat*. The letter included an explanation for that apology and that I would like to maintain my freedom to criticise him if necessary. I was waiting for the man to accept my excuse, but he hid his anger, concealed flatness, and the friendship between us ended after that [15 (p. 252)].

This was also a good opportunity in which I learned about my morals. The lapse in judgment did not diminish my appreciation for Shawqi the poet. As for Shawqi the friend, my violent temperament erupted against him. I promised that I would not meet him again, except for a chance meeting with the same stubborn, ascetic soul [15 (p. 264)].

The last time I saw Shawqi was in the Azbakeya Park Theatre on the day we gathered to assist the writer Mahmoud Abu Al-Wafa. On that day, Shawqi, broken and devastated, appeared to my eyes with the dignity of saints. When I learned that he was going to hold a tea party at his house for members of the Apollo Society, I wanted to attend, for fear that it would be the last time people would see the Prince of Poets. But I refused to go without an invitation. What I had thought was correct, and it was the last time Shawqi would receive men of literature in his home. How sad I was for those good moments I wasted!

I never offended Shawqi the poet, thank God, even though I forfeited my relationship with Shawqi the friend. I suffered many calamities for my admiration for his poetry. Some people would have liked to destroy him, and among those people were men whom I respected and in whom I saw the imagination of a genius, but they were eager to attack Shawqi. They went through various paths to demolish him, yet Shawqi was truly a great poet, and he was too stubborn for the shovels of the demolishers to touch him. So, they returned stroking the thresholds of morality and patriotism, and they went on journeys in which the steps were drawn by Satan. Morals and patriotism are a crutch on which every spiteful person lean, and morals and patriotism will remain a pillar upon which the weak in soul and mind rely as long as the people of the East listen well to the claims of patriotism and morals! [15 (p. 265)].

In Shawqi's house, he began to talk about many matters, and from time to time he would get up to talk to his son, Sis, which is a title he gave to his son, Hussein. In the afternoon, he drove us to Cairo in his car, and at the Qasr al-Nil Bridge, Shawqi would stop, cry like a child, and mumble, 'From what era in the world does it flow?' It is the greatest poem a poet has ever said describing the Nile. Then his strength would fail him, and he would ask me to carry him to the office, while he was in a state of astonishment. Shawqi was thin to the point of emaciation [15 (pp. 309-310)].

With Dr Zaki Abu Shadi, I composed a poetry association that we called the Apollo Association. We chose Shawqi to be the president. The association met at Dr Abu Shadi's house in Matariya.

Shawqi would attend for a few moments and then leave, and Dr Shadi would ask to hear the poems that might be published in the magazine. He used to answer him: Dr Mubarak is blessed enough to do this, and I would kiss his hand as I used to kiss my father's hand [15 (p. 317)].

Zaki Mubarak said in his eulogy for Shawqi these poignant words:

The last time I saw Shawqi was at the Azbakeya Garden Theatre in the spring of 1932. He was thin, his eyes rippling, and his hands shaking. I intended to kiss his right hand that day, and then I remembered what had transpired between us, so my chest squeezed and I turned away:

'If I had known that that last time we met would be, the day of separation, I would have done what I did not do'. [44 (p. 168)].

Shawqi is an envied poet, for he has filled all ears and moved many hearts. He was given the opportunity to remain the leader of poets for more than forty years, a true leadership that only the stubborn doubt. How much his opponents have suffered in demolishing him, while with age, criticism did not affect him except as rain creates strong fortresses [22 (p. 40)].

Shawqi was not the first to die, but a poet's death is a tragedy that prompts thinking about the realities of death and life, especially Shawqi. We do not know a person in Egypt whose life was as good as Shawqi's, and we do not know a poet who sang about the good things of life as Shawqi did [22 (p.242)].

Muhammad Al-Ghunaimi Al-Taftazani (1893-1936)

Muhammad Al-Ghunaimi Al-Taftazani was an Egyptian writer, poet, preacher, and Sufi. He was known for his Arab nationalist tendencies. He created the Sufi magazine *Al-Basha'ir* and published articles in many Egyptian newspapers in his time. He also wrote and translated a number of books.

Excerpts of what was stated by Al-Taftazani, who was among Shawqi's intimate friends, in an article titled 'Memories of Shawqi and Hafeth are shown below.

Shawqi used to live in his father's house in Matariya, and this old house is still standing behind the Sheikh Saleh Abi Hadid Mosque in the Hanafi line. Next to that old house was a man of wealth and prosperity and of true virtue and complete dignity. He was the late Hussein Pasha Shaheen. He had three daughters who were symbols of manners, etiquette and perfection. Golden youth whose wealth had been lost by their own actions or by the actions of their fathers flocked to him, but he apologised and refused them. It was God's will that this glorious man would win, when three of the best Egyptian youth, Ahmad Shawqi, Ahmad Al-Muhandis, and the late Yacoub Hilmi married his daughters. Thus, God blessed Shawqi with a good wife in every sense of the word, so that he was relieved from the troubles of home life and the troubles of material living.

I knew Shawqi, as a close neighbour, then as a unique poet, and ultimately as a great man. Shawqi has aspects that people do not know. Not anyone who lived in the Hanafi area knew Shawqi.

Shawqi was born, grew up, and married in the shade of the dome of Shams Al-Din Al-Hanafi. Since our upbringing, we have become accustomed to witnessing the 'Hadra' held by the Sufi Brotherhood in Sultan Square at dawn every day, and this is rarely interrupted, even in the harshest days of winter. In the morning, we performed the obligatory prayer, participated in the dhikr (divine remembrance) gathering, and recited Hizb Al-Bir by Abu Al-Hasan Al-Shathli. We visited the shrine of the Hanafi Sultan, and afterward went to our homes to prepare breakfast and then to work, each to his destination. This was the custom of the majority of the people of the Hanafi Sultan's line, both youth and adults, and these customs continue to this day.

This is Shawqi (Pasha), as we used to call him, this is the poet of the prince, this inspiring spirit that longs for the tomb of the Hanafi Sultan, asking God for forgiveness and protection in this world and the hereafter, and praying for his family and children. Then He distributes alms to the poor and needy refugees in the Sultan's court. How strong was the Prince of Poets on this type of giving and this style of asceticism.

When Shawqi fell ill and was confined to his bed, his messengers used to arrive at the house of his father-in-law, the late pious Hussein Pasha Shaheen, to assign the late Sheikh Hassan Sarhan, the chief jurist of the district and one of the muezzins of the Sultan Mosque, to plead with God, the Most Merciful, to pardon Shawqi.

Finally, Shawqi fell ill, and I was summoned by phone to his palace in Giza. He received me in his bedroom while he was on his sick bed, and then he asked me, in the prayer of a faithful believer, to read the Quranic verse Yasin for him, and to ask Al-Fatihah for him in the shrine of the Hanafi Sultan.

And his method remained with me. He would become ill and ask me as a doctor to assign one of the pious jurists to recite Yaseen to God Almighty as he wanted. Then I would recite Al-Fatihah for him in the dhikr gathering, and he would recover, and the page would turn temporarily, and so on until he met his Lord, forgiven.

As he grew older, he was optimistic about everything related to religion, even the sentence written on a board hanging on the wall. His son, Hussein Shawqi, said, 'It is our good fortune that we found our house in Matariya safe and unharmed after the long absence - the period of exile to Andalusia. My father attributed the protection and safety of the house to the blessing of a plaque that was hanging at the entrance, on which was written, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God"'. When we left Matariya, we took this sign with us and used it to decorate our new home. In his old age, he used to read books on Islamic philosophy and admire Al-Ghazali's books. His admiration for Al-Ghazali did not stem from his mind, but rather from his conscience.

I used to tell myself that Shawqi had not yet studied Sufism. yet he surprised me when he said, 'I have studied Sufism extensively, and I know all the terms that Sufis use to describe their states'. His private secretary also mentioned that he was reading to him the book of al-Ghazali (*A Brief History of Uncovering Hearts*) and he stayed up after midnight, and only one topic remained, which was the death of prophet Muhammad. He said I reminded him that it was time

for his exercise, and he responded, 'No, not until it is completed'. So, I read to him about the prophet's death, and he started crying' [45 (pp. 23-24)].

Fikri Hussein Abatha (1896-1979)

Fikri Hussein Abatha was a prominent figure in literature and political journalism in Egypt, who was nicknamed the Sheikh of Journalists, and the Knight of the Word. Abatha was described as a pioneering journalist, and his articles were known for raising important issues and opposing corruption and occupation. He was also a well-known radio speaker. Abatha was elected president of the Journalists Syndicate for four consecutive terms.

Fikri Abaza was a fighter in the Egyptian National Movement, and one of the preachers of the 1919 Revolution in Egypt, led by Sa'ad Zaghloul. He was the author and composer of the Egyptian revolutionary anthem at the time. As an amateur musician, he composed 100 pieces of music played on the flute and mandolin.

Fikri, as previously mentioned, recited Shawqi's poem in the ceremony that was held in his honor at the Opera House, where Arab poets pledged allegiance to Shawqi on 29 April 1927.

Fikri, like Mahjoub, was a cheerful man, and it can be assumed that Shawqi preferred light-hearted friends like them. Fikri wrote that he had been present with Ahmad Shawqi in Lebanon in 1927 and sat with him in a cafe owned by a bully. We knew from public conversations that this tormentor had stolen his uncle's wife and married her. While we were sitting in the café, this bully approached us, welcomed Shawqi, and introduced himself as a poet. He asked Shawqi to listen to one of his own poems; yet, he began reciting one of Shawqi's poem line by line, while Shawqi quietly listened. Before the owner finished reciting, he was called to the phone, so I took advantage of our time together to say to Shawqi, 'I'm going crazy. The man is reciting your poem'. Shawqi laughed softly and responded, 'Keep quiet. This bully stole his uncle's wife. Will he not steal my poem?' The man returned from the phone call and resumed chanting the stolen poem. We applauded him in enjoyment or maybe it was in fear. [46]

In a lengthy poem, Shawqi said to his friend Fikri:

فكرى أدقت اليوم عفو بلاغة وزففت محضاً للنهى وللبابا
من كل فاكهة وكل فاكهة هيأت نحلاً واتخذت شراباً
ما زلت تنثر كل طيبة الشذى حتى جمعت من الزهور كتاباً
فأتى ألد من الربيع وعهده فضلاً وأمتع في البدائع باباً

Fikri, today you tasted the pardon of eloquence,
and brought forth pure wisdom and a core.
From every fruit and every humour,
you prepared bees and made a drink.
You continued to scatter all the goodness of fragrance,
until you collected a book from the flowers.
Then came a door more delicious than spring and its covenant
more virtuous and enjoyable than its times.

Muhammad Abdul-Wahab (1898-1991)

Muhammad Abdul-Wahab was an Egyptian musician and an icon of Arabic music. He was nicknamed the Musician of Generations, and his name is associated with national anthems. He was born in Cairo, and worked as a music composer and film actor. He began his artistic career as a singer in 1917. In 1920, he studied the oud at the Institute of Arabic Music. He began working in radio in 1934 and in cinema in 1933. He was associated with the Prince of Poets and composed many songs for the Shawqi, most of which he sang in his own voice. He also composed for many singers in Egypt and the Arab countries.

In 1924, a party was held in one of the casinos in Alexandria, hosted by Mohamed Abdul-Wahab, and attended by state officials and many celebrities, including Ahmad Shawqi, who asked to meet Abdul-Wahab after the party ended. The seven years that Abdul-Wahab spent with Ahmed Shawqi are considered to be the most important stages of his life, as he considered Shawqi his role model. Shawqi mentored Abdul-Wahab and worked to guide and direct him, becoming his spiritual father. He prepared a special room for him in his house, Karmat Ibn Hani in Giza and called it the 'Nest of the Nightingale', Shawqi introduced Abdul-Wahab to his friends who consisted of leaders, journalists, writers and poets, and encouraged him to learn the French language. He took him with him on his trips to the Levant and Paris, and provided him with all the opportunities to listen to world music. Shawqi also dedicated many poems to him in classical and colloquial Arabic. Abdul-Wahab sang a song with lyrics by Shawqi, composed for the wedding of Ali Shawqi, his son. Abdul-Wahab remained with Shawqi until the last day of his life, and sang at his memorial service. Abdul-Wahab remained loyal to Shawqi and did not stop singing his poems after his death. He even influenced some of his films to include poems by Shawqi.

Musician Muhammad Abdul-Wahab noted that Shawqi travelled for more than one reason, because he was an artist who loved to socialise – with the country, with the neighbourhood, and with the room. When we stayed in a hotel, the owner would only him the room he used to give him when he was a student in Paris and the chair he used to sit on. He used to frequent the Darnour Café, and when he entered, they would seat him at his own table.

Shawqi loved reading in French because he had graduated from the Sorbonne. He read everything that talked about the books he was working on. For example, when he came to make *Cleopatra*, he travelled to Paris and bought all the books that discussed her, in order to view Cleopatra from the eyes of foreigners (what she meant to them and how they looked at her). He would write of and defend her from his point of view as seen in his poetic play, *The Death of Cleopatra*.

Once I asked him why he loved Paris so much. He responded, 'Because the French distribute the pleasures of life fairly; they eat well, they joke well, they give everything its due'. Abdul-Wahab also stated that Shawqi loved food, or to be more precise: he was a gourmet, but not a glutton [19 (p.50)].

SHAWQI'S OPPONENTS

In keeping with the natural and avant-garde role of the true poet, Ahmad Shawqi was an official and creative spokesperson for the nation. He was the true Minister of Information at a time when such a position did not exist. He gathered hearts and minds around him, and aroused such

admiration and appreciation about his personality and creativity that he called on people for praise, hyperbole, and flattery, as much as he called on others to criticise and accuse him for being negligent and a rigid imitator. However, the prince remained steadfast, like a steady mountain, in the face of wind currents and violent storms. Such emotions soon turned, as a result of Shawqi's steadfastness, into tranquility, peace, compliments, apologies, and finally an admission of exaggeration, excess, and negligence against the Prince of Poets.

Despite all the criticism to which Shawqi was subjected, it did not affect his poetic status or fame. He reached the pinnacle of fame and glory. He became a member of the Senate in 1924 and was named the Prince of Poets in 1927. The second edition of his collection of poems, *Shawqiyyat*, was published in this year. The first edition had been published in 1898, and on the occasion of the publication of the second edition of *Shawqiyyat*, a number of honoring parties were held for him.

Shawqi's Enviars

Shawqi gathered the hearts and minds of people around him. He aroused admiration and appreciation for his personality and creativity, leading some people to praise, magnify, and compliment him. Likewise, it called others to criticise and accuse him.

Shawqi was an envied poet. He filled the ears and pleased the hearts with his poetry. He was given the opportunity to remain the leader of poets for more than 40 years. This is a true leadership that only the obstinate will deny. How miserable his opponents were in trying to demolish him, while, the malicious criticism did not affect him except in the way the rain creates a strong fortress.

Do not ask about the secret of Shawqi's greatness, because poetry is usually a divine scent that cannot be attained by sweat or effort. He was not the most knowledgeable or smartest of his contemporaries, nor was he the best informed about the nature of life and the laws of existence [22 (p. 41)].

Arrows of Criticism

Among those who directed arrows of criticism strongly and harshly at the Prince of Poets were Taha Hussein, Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad, Abdul Rahman Shukri, Ibrahim Al-Mazni, Mikhail Na'ayma and Maroun Abboud. Many people criticised Shawqi for political reasons, including his ridicule of the national leader Ahmad Orabi and his poor relationship with the national forces that were calling at the time for the removal of the constitution and the evacuation of the British from Egypt, as well as his standing by Khedive Abbas and his appeasement of the British. Shawqi was also greatly criticised for his praise of the Ottoman sultans, as seen in his poem in which he praised Sultan Abdul Hamid, in whom Shawqi found an example of justice and humanity. He was also charged with adhering to the policy of neutrality and the policy of the palace and avoiding everything that harmed or angered the British.

Despite Shawqi's high status in the field of poetry, which prompted most of the poets of his time to pledge allegiance to him as their prince, many quarreled with him, anticipating a fall or a lapse. They would launch their sharp weapons in order to diminish and expose this unique, lofty edifice. But Shawqi, despite all the extraordinary genius God had bestowed on him, elevating him above those who came before and after him, was extremely hurt by criticism of

his poetry, and became annoyed and impatient with those who criticised him for his frequent lamentations, praise and congratulations.

Yet a person of Shawqi's stature, who lived through, lived with, and befriended kings, leaders, people of prestige, thinkers, writers, inventors, poets, and greats in every art, whom God has distinguished with abilities that set them apart from all others, could not remain silent if one of them encountered a success that deserved congratulations or if one suffered a misfortune, because of his deep sensitivity.

Shawqi was exasperated with those who criticised him for his frequent lamentations and congratulations, and he had the right to be. Shawqi could not refrain from writing poetry, congratulating, consoling, or praising a great and noble deed, when he learned of news of those he loved and those he singled out for his love. Rather, he saw that his silence about such events was wrong, and it was the disobedience for which he deserves to be held accountable. Many critics sought such congratulations or pity to start their attacks.

In such circumstances, Shawqi used the wisdom of philosophers and the logic of reasoning when he said that if he were criticised for praising great people out of support and adulation, then what would he gain from someone who travelled and left the world? He added to this sentiment stating, 'He who does not pay tribute to the dead does not pay tribute to the living' [1 (pp. 59-60)].

The great troubles that surrounded Shawqi would have turned the heads of weaker souls, but Shawqi always turned a blind eye to what betrayed his friend's character in an outburst of anger, excessive indulging, or a lapse in judgment. He would make excuses for his friends, overlooking trifles, so that his friend would feel that there was nothing to blame him for. Even his most bitter opponents were also safe from his machinations, not because he was incapable of doing so, but rather because he was conservative in ways required by the honor of rivalry and the rules of etiquette [1 (p. 99)].

The poet Al-Mutanabbi (915-965 AD), the greatest Arab poet before Shawqi, was exposed to critics of his time, just as Shawqi was exposed. It is surprising to discover that Al-Mutanabbi, the beloved Arab poet of Shawqi, shared with him the arrows of critics.

Yet the matter differed between the two poets in praise, as well as in congratulations and elegies. The poetic industry in the era of Al-Mutanabbi, and the need for the demands of living, pushed him to follow this path. As for Shawqi, who lived in abundance, bliss, and high esteem, it was his loyalty to his brothers and loved ones and the tenderness of his feelings that never stopped him from congratulating, extending, or lamenting whenever happened [1 (p.107)].

Those Who Wished to Cut Him to Pieces

Zaki Mubarak stated, 'There were those who wished to cut him into pieces'. When a poet reaches Shawqi's level of glory and greatness, he will inevitably be exposed to criticism and envy, and this is the nature of humans. The arrows of the new school of poetry began attacking Shawqi ferociously, after three friends Abbas Al-Aqqad (1889-1964), Ibrahim Al-Mazni (1889-1949), and Abdul Rahman Shukri (1886-1958) announced their new poetic movement during

the end of the first decade of the twentieth century. They, along with his companion Hafeth Ibrahim (1872–1932) began the attack on Shawqi as a part of the classical poetic revival.

This attack intensified when Al-Mazni published his book on Hafeth's poetry in 1915, and it reached its peak with the publication of the book *The Diwan in Literature and Criticism*, in which Al-Aqqad participated with Al-Mazni. Al-Mazni undertook an attack on Mustafa Al-Manfaluti (1876-1924) as the dean of the prose school of revival. Al-Aqqad individualised it by attacking Shawqi, who played a major role in the revivalist poetry movement, together with Ahmad Naseem (1878-1938), Ahmad Muharram (1877-1945), Ahmad Al-Kashef (1878-1948), Muhammad Abd Ul-Muttalib (1870-1931), Ali Al-Jarim (1881-1949), and other poets of the second or even third rank in the era of revivalism. *The Diwan* was published in 1921. It was parallel in its publication to *The Sieve*, which was published by Mikhail Naiema (1889-1989) in 1923 in support of the opinions of his colleagues Al-Mazni and Al-Aqqad. Therefore, the articles in *The Sieve* included an article about welcoming *The Diwan*.

There were positions taken by well-known writers, poets and critics regarding Shawqi. Some were outspoken and supportive, while others were attacking and violent, all within Shawqi's vision and hearing. Those who knew Shawqi confirmed that he was afraid of criticism and critics, and, therefore, he worked to appease those who dealt with the Prince of Poets from near and far. Once this point of weakness in him became known, it became widespread among journalists who began to make a living from their valid and unjust criticisms, or who were behind the threat of writing such criticisms.

Ahmad Mahfouth said that despite his great stature and firm footing in the art, Shawqi would never settle between newspaper houses. Likewise, his table would not remove its plates, nor would its cover be folded. It was always surrounded by journalists and others whose pens and criticism he feared. In truth, he was the one who inflicted on himself. His extreme fear of criticism tempted all these gentlemen. They knew his weakness, and they took advantage of him [47 (p.135)].

The Battles of the Press

Shawqi faced many wars in his life. He faced disputes from Taha Hussein, Al-Aqqad, Al-Mazini, Abd Al-Rahman Shukri and all of their supporters.

Then he faced a cheap war from the owners of small newspapers, based on greed for his money. The late Ahmad Fu'ad, the owner of the newspaper *Al-Sa'iqa*, nicknamed 'Fu'ad Thunderbolt', whenever he lacked money, would send a messenger to Shawqi telling him that Thunderbolt would attack him. Shawqi, who was scared of criticism, would send someone to give him however much money he wanted to keep him quiet. Despite this, Fu'ad Al-Sa'iqa adored Shawqi, and memorized his poetry by heart, just as he memorised at least 30,000 verses of other Arab poetry [48 (pp. 76-77)].

Shawqi was met with hostility from some major newspapers due to various circumstances, including his old connections with the palace and his rivalry at times with Sa'ad Zaghloul, and an in-law relationship that sometimes linked him to Ismail Sidqi (Pasha, Prime Minister of Egypt). Writers (critics) used to mix literature and politics, and did not differentiate between Shawqi the poet and Shawqi, Ismail Sidqi's son-in-law [19 (p.30)].

Anwar Al-Jundi wrote an article, 'Literary Battles between Shawqi and His Critics' in the *Al-Hilal* journal (Issue No. 11, November 1968), in which he talked about many features of the poet's personality, as this was an important factor in the criticism battles that arose around his poetry and his personality. And between Shawqi's attempts, after his return from exile and getting rid of the palace, to appease all the parties that were in turn struggling and fighting to appease him and bring him closer, some journalists found his criticism a means of making money, and thus Shawqi's poetry became the subject of writers' criticism and praise throughout his life.

The Diwan in Literature and Criticism

The largest battle was the Battle of the Diwan (only two parts were published and then it was discontinued). It included a lengthy study of poetry and other studies about Al-Manfaluti and Abd Al-Rahman Shukri.

In 1921, the book *Al-Diwan on Literature and Criticism* was published by Abbas Al-Aqqad and Ibrahim Al-Mazni. The authors believed that the poetry and literature of their time were not represented by the poetry of Ahmad Shawqi and the literature of Al-Manfaluti. Therefore, they declared a revolution against the idols of their time; Al-Aqqad refuted Shawqi's poetry, and Al-Mazni devoted himself to the literature of Al-Manfaluti. They revolted against everything that was old. They rejected the rhyme system and the lengthy poem, and announced the founding of a new literary school called the 'Diwan School', after the title of their book, whose most important principles were that its doctrine was 'humanistic, Egyptian and Arab'. They called for innovation in the form, content, structure and language of poetry. The book represented an important literary stage in the history of Arabic literature and poetry, and it became a literary battle fought by the giants of literature and thought in that period [49].

People met to support Shawqi's leadership of poetry, while the Diwan school, which is the mother of the critical schools in the modern era, deviated from this consensus. Critics considered it the beginning of the renewal movement in Arabic poetry, because it was accompanied, in their opinion, by a critical title and a clear vision of new literary concepts. It was also part of a general trend that arose at the beginning of the Arab Renaissance, which was the romantic trend whose pioneer was the great poet, Mutran Khalil Mutran (1872-1949). The founders of this school were Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad (1889-1964), Ibrahim Abdel Qader Al-Mazni (1889-1949) and Abdel Rahman Shukri (1886-1958). They were also known as the 'New Generation' as they were influenced in their reading by English and French literature.

The Diwan began with the poet Abd al-Rahman Shukri's publication of his poetry collection *Light of Dawn* in 1909, in which the features of innovation were clear. Shukri drew attention and received much admiration and appreciation. He combined two trends in his poetry, the emotional, complaining, rebellious style of al-Mazni and the rational intellectual style that was unique to Al-Aqqad.

Shawqi's Response to his Critics

Shawqi did not confront such campaigns with an explicit response. Rather, he had newspapers and writers whom he supported. Among the most important of these were two journals: *Okath*, which was represented by its owner, Sheikh Fahim Qandil, and *Al-Sa'iqa*, which was represented by its editor Ahmad Fou'ad. *Okath* faced the emergence of *Al-Diwan* by launching a continuous campaign of ten articles under the title 'The Caravan is Marching' These articles

described Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazni as 'the Barbarian and the Dwarf'. *Okath* reported that one of its biggest mistakes was that it brought Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazni to the people from the insects of the earth.

Okath further stated that they wanted to pave the way for a livelihood for them, and to get them out of the life of unemployment and laziness, and accustom them to living in honorable ways. Therefore, they enrolled them in *Okath* at the beginning of their upbringing, and we tolerated them and the insults and vices they spread. When their bellies were full, meanness and decadence appeared. If people remember anything, they will never forget Al-Mazni's irresponsibility and lightness, nor Al-Aqqad's recklessness and foolishness.

Okath said that they were attacking Shawqi, while stating, 'There is no poet today like him. Shawqi is the most beautiful of the ancients with the strength of his words and the clarity of his style, and Shawqi does not need to be mentioned by his glory, nor does his poetry need to be defended. Oh Shawqi, oh shining sun and luminous moon, oh absolute perfection and a valuable book'.

Okath added, 'If you read 'The Leaves of Insults' (in the book *The Diwan*), you would think that the two authors were criticising Shawqi, the Prince of Poets. Yet if you searched for their analogy and argument, you would find them accusing all Arabic poetry of shortcomings and weakness. So, if you want to reach the goal of the critics, look at the analogy that they made as a demarcation between them. You would see that they do not measure it with an Arabic standard, nor with the principles of knowledge by which Arab poets in general are measured' This would be true even if we followed their method of criticism, and brought much of Al-Mutanabbi's poetry, meanings, and imagination, and commissioned someone to convey it to the European in his language, and we made his good reception of it conditional [47 (pp.140-141)]. On the occasion of honoring Shawqi, in 1927 the weekly *Al-Seyassah* headed by Dr Muhammad Hussein Heikal, issued a special issue on Shawqi, which included what he delivered at the honoring ceremony. Alongside it were 25 diverse articles and studies from multiple writers covering varying aspects of Shawqi. All of these articles appreciated and praised Shawqi, with the exception of two studies that criticised him harshly: one of them by Al-Aqqad, and the other by Al-Mazni.

The weekly journal *Al-Seyassah*, reported that Shawqi became a member of the Senate in 1924 and was named Prince of Poets in 1927. This year, the second edition of his collection of poems, *Al-Shawqiyat*, was published. The first edition had been published in 1898. When the second edition of *Al-Shawqiyat* was published, a number of honoring ceremonies were held for him. The concerts were performed by Muhammad Kurd Ali on behalf of the Scientific Academy in Damascus, and the poets participated in placing the crown of Arabic poetry on his head. Hafeth Ibrahim (1872-1932) declared, in his name and in the name of the poets of the Arab countries, allegiance to Shawqi.

Okath responded to Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazni, and wrote an article entitled 'Shawqi Envisers', in which it indicated that Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazni coveted Shawqi's money. A battle took place between *Al-Seyassah*, whose editor-in-chief was Dr Muhammad Hussein Heikal, and *Okath* over Shawqi's poetry and personality.

The Position of Shawqi's Supporters

The weekly issue of *Al-Seyassah* had barely been published when it faced a massive campaign of criticism from Shawqi's supporters. *Okath* issued a special issue honoring Shawqi, and wrote an article under the title 'Shawqi's Envious'. Then it published another lengthy article in the next issue. This in part is what Sheikh Fahim Qandil said in it

:

'Egypt has succeeded in honoring respectful poet Shawqi, and the credit for this is not due to Shafiq Pasha nor to Hafeth Awad nor to Nu'man Al-A'sar nor to their ilk and people like them. Rather, it is due to Shawqi's genius and Shawqi's greatness'.

As for those in charge of *Al-Seyassah*, as for the enemies of mastermind and the opponents of genius, as for the foolish and the lowly, as for the tyrannical chumps and the mean libertines, as for all of these haters, they have come out barking, and gone out reveling. How would they not seize this opportunity to attack Shawqi ?

Attack on the Editor-in-Chief

Okath returned to attacking the weekly *Al-Seyassah*, and Dr Heikal in particular, and said: 'Dr Heikal is known for being close to Shawqi, following in his footsteps, and praising his mention. So, what happened that that admiration turned into disdain?'

If a person other than Dr Heikal had been editor of *Al-Seyassah* and the revelation had descended upon him, as is his custom every day, to shift the gears from praising Shawqi into vilifying him, before the ink of his praise could dry, he would have lingered, but he is like a trumpet in the mouth of the blower. Because he has no will for anything, and we know that he has long since gone to Karmat Ibn Hani' (Shawqi's house), to be confined to his group and taste its food and drink.

Can the editor-in-chief of *Al-Seyassah* remind us where those defects with which he was trying to ruin the reputation of the Prince of Poets were, when he wrote the introduction to his collection, and the day he volunteered to participate in honoring him and mobilising the Arab countries to send their delegations? Where was *Al-Seyassah* and its editor-in-chief, Ali Shawqi, the day it brought together the virtues of the world and placed Shawqi in the position of angels and saints?

'Oh, Dr Heikal: You should have been the last person to mention the pseudonyms and paid newspapers, and the last person to stand before Shawqi in a quarrelsome or obscene manner' [47 (pp. 147-148)].

THE CRITICS

Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad (1889-1964)

Abbas Mahmoud Al-Aqqad was an Egyptian writer, thinker, journalist and poet, famous for his literary battles. He was also a former member of the Egyptian Parliament and a member of the Arabic Language Academy. Al-Aqqad is considered one of the most important writers of the twentieth century in Egypt. He contributed greatly to literary and political life, and added more than 100 books to the Arab library. In various fields, Al-Aqqad succeeded in journalism due to his wide-ranging mind, and he remained known as an encyclopedist of knowledge who was well read in human history, philosophy, literature and sociology.

It is true that Al-Aqqad waged many literary battles, but his battle with the Prince of Poets is considered one of the largest and most violent battles witnessed in the literary arena. Al-Aqqad rejected all of Shawqi's poetry, and considered it to be poetry dominated by the spirit of imitation and simulation, devoid of innovation and spirit. Thus, he met with his two friends, the writers Al-Mazeni and Shukri in their disdain of Shawqi and worked to destroy him. For that reason they founded the Diwan group, mentioned above. The three giants planned to compose ten documents, of which only two came into existence. With these documents, they would establish a new literary doctrine with the characteristics of Egyptian-Arab humanism and it would be the greatest approach people have known since the Arabic language came into being. There was no way to achieve this except by destroying 'the idols of poetry represented by Shawqi and Hafeth Ibrahim'.

The Diwan Group

Al-Aqqad was one of the founders of the Diwan School, which was concerned with criticism in the modern era. It was also the first step towards innovation in Arabic poetry, because it worked on demonstrating new concepts in literature. The school first appeared in 1909, and its name was a reference to the book *The Diwan on Literature and Criticism*, written by Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazeni in 1921. The book is a frenetic attack on the most important figures in the literary arena, both opponents and supporters.

Three critics formed the Diwan School, namely Al-Aqqad, Al-Mazni and Shukri, because they agreed intellectually around their poetic vision, artistic foundation and aesthetic concepts. They formed an important critical school in the history of modern Arabic poetry, despite the short period of time the school existed.

The pioneers of the Critical Diwan School were influenced by English literature, and by romantic poets and writers in particular, and they took a position of hostility and blatant rejection of the poets of the classical school, which they called the conservative school, and called its poets imitators. Their rejection of imitation motivated them to search for an alternative. They were reassured when they turned to the poetry of the Romantics, so they adopted many of these principles, and in this they met the Arabic scripts that Mutran called for and achieved in his poetry. These principles included the demand for poetry to be a poetic experience with an individual character, leaning towards emotional poetry that carried the psychological traits of its poet and highlighted his distinct personality. They demanded artistic unity in the poem, and paid special superior attention to imagination. They called for what is known as free poetry, meaning that the poem does not end with a unified rhyme, but rather each verse ends with a special rhyme, because they viewed uniform rhyme as monotonous and boring to the listener.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Egypt witnessed a large number of literary battles, perhaps the largest number in the history of Arabic literature. In Egypt, these battles took on a critical dimension that sometimes intensified, resulting in personal rivalry, and sometimes calmed down to result in critical opinions that added a lot to the standards of literary criticism. This resulted in a number of critical opinions that benefitted the critic and the criticised alike, benefitted the audience of writers and readers alike, and moved the stagnant waters in literary life.

One of the most famous literary battles that Egypt witnessed during that period was the 'Battle of the Diwan' between Al-Aqqad and Shawqi, which resulted in the renowned book about the history of contemporary Arabic literature, *The Diwan in Literature and Criticism*. In it, Al-Aqqad criticised Shawqi's poetry, even though the criticism departed from the usual limits and often resulted in a personal attack. Al-Aqqad began his criticism of Shawqi in the book's introduction, which is titled 'Shawqi on the Scale'. This section exhibits extravagance and violence in the personal attack on Shawqi. Al-Aqqad continued this personal attack on Shawqi using harsh language, violent words and bitter sarcasm. If a writer had written these words today, he would have been subjected to the law on charges of insult and defamation, but the literary atmosphere in those days was more accustomed to such methods of criticism.

Shawqi had a strange way of responding to his critical opponents, as he did not appear in person but left the matter to his interlocutors and those who benefitted from him. It seems that Shawqi could not bear to meet Al-Aqqad, who in his view was a large snake, if not the greatest of all, so instead, he tempted newspaper writers against him.

There is no doubt that Al-Aqqad was one of the greatest critics in the history of contemporary Arabic literature, and he was equipped with an encyclopedic knowledge that is rare for a writer or critic. His ability to dig through rock to achieve what he did merits admiration, even if we strip away what he wrote regarding personal attacks. If we put aside the sarcasm and mockery of his criticism of Shawqi, we would find ourselves with serious, objective criticism.

Al-Aqqad also attacked Shawqi because he was close to the ruling class, the ministers, the palace, and the officials. Shawqi was 'royal' in all of his poetry, whether it involved praise or wisdom, an encouragement of piety, good character, or noble morals. As a royal, he was known for upholding goodness and customs and concealing behind outward appearances the truths of himself and the depths of his conscience. In this sense, Shawqi never took off his badge of honor in any of his poems or verses [50 (p. 182)].

Al-Aqqad and Al-Mazni's opinions about Shawqi changed after his death in 1932, while Dr Taha Hussein's opinion of Shawqi remained moderate.

Following Shawqi's death, Al-Aqqad modified his opinion, saying, 'He is the imam of a school that we can call the school of innovative imitation or independent imitation'. Shawqi was not a mechanical imitator who adhered to the limits of formal imitation, but according to Al-Aqqad, he used to imitate and act, and his behaviour removed him from the group of transcribers and copyists; however, it did not place him among the innovators and creators who have 'distinctive features of the soul' imprinted on everything they formulate, whether poetry or prose, for it has invigorated poetry from the stagnation of hammered formulas and repeated meanings. But he was unable to move it from the poetry of general templates to the poetry of a specific personality whose features are not hidden or confused by others. The outcome is that he is an innovative imitator or an imitating innovator, for he does not follow in the footsteps of the ancients, nor is he unique in his personal features in expression itself or the expression of others [47 (p.150)].

Al-Aqqad later 'praised' the late Shawqi in a speech he delivered at the festival held in Cairo in 1958 to celebrate the poet. He stated at the beginning, 'Ahmad Shawqi was a scholar of his

generation. He was a scholar of the school that moved poetry from the role of stagnation and mechanical imitation to the role of behaviour and innovation’.

Al-Aqqad, rapporteur of the Poetry Committee, stated at the opening of the Shawqi Festival in Cairo in 1958, ‘Ahmad Shawqi was a scholar of his generation. He was a scholar of the school that moved poetry from the role of stagnation and mechanical imitation to the role of action and innovation. He had a number of advantages and characteristics that were different from the poets of his time. There was never a quality or characteristic found in any of the poets of that era that did not have its counterpart in the poetry of Shawqi from its beginning to its conclusion’. These characteristics may be similar or different, or they may be equal, and they may be many or few, but, in any case, they are present in some form in Shawqi’s words, counted between his deceptions and signs, or between his shortcomings and lapses.

Shawqi’s position in the palace prevented him from the frankness that Hafeth was capable of in his free field, far from the ceremonies of politics and the traditions of royal courtiers. But Shawqi contested the foreign control that dominated the ruler and the ruled, the prince and the warden. He did not refrain from participating in taking a national position whenever the entire nation agreed against the foreign invasion and foreign control. His collections were full of poems that were passed down by narrators and are still being passed on.

Al-Aqqad continued to state in his speech that the composed play, in poetry and rhyme, began to appear when Shawqi was born or before, but his plays were closer to the facts of history and life incidents and were not like his predecessors, which were in the style of wonder and conquest, and in a heroic style like that in equestrian literature. The sermons and proverbs were composed before and during the days of Shawqi, but he organised them as an innovator and not as a transmitter or translator in the style of previous narrators [51].

Perhaps I will not jump to the conclusion when I say that Al-Aqqad’s criticism of Shawqi’s poetry did not benefit Shawqi, nor did his poetry profit from it. I do not know exactly why. Was it because poets (in general) do not interact with criticism, and that the nature of creativity and trends of talent take their course without paying attention to what is exposed in this way? Or is it because Al-Aqqad’s criticism of Shawqi appeared after Shawqi reached 50 years of age (and returned from exile), and, therefore, it was difficult to influence him and call on him to abandon the familiarity of his craft, which he had been accustomed to for more than 30 years of his creative life? Or was it because Al-Aqqad’s contemptuous, hurtful and ungrateful language did not suit the Prince of Poets, and it was not appropriate for him to carefully consider the essence, regardless of the style, and, therefore, he had no choice but to neglect it completely? These are possibilities. There is nothing preventing one from accepting one or all of them [19 (pp. 30-31)].

Taha Hussein (1889-1973)

Taha Hussein was among the most influential twentieth century Egyptian writers and intellectuals and a leading figure of the Arab Renaissance and the modernist movement in the Arab world. His sobriquet was ‘The Dean of Arabic Literature’. He lost his sight at the age of four, yet studied at Al-Azhar and enrolled at Egyptian University in 1908, obtaining a doctorate in 1914. After his return from France, he worked as a professor of Greek and Roman history at Egyptian University. Later he became a professor of the history of Arabic literature at the

College of Arts, and then dean of the college. In 1942, he was appointed advisor to the Minister of Education, and later became the director of Alexandria University. In 1950, he became Minister of Education.

Hussein's criticism of Ahmed Shawqi did not resemble Al-Aqqad's in terms of cruelty, sharpness and violence. He was calm and tolerant, although not devoid of sarcasm at times. However, he maintained a distance in his writing, preserving the possibility of dialogue. Therefore, his relationship with Ahmad Shawqi differed from Al-Aqqad's, and it remained a friendship that involved appreciation, respect, and love, despite the differences in their taste and the divergence of creative ideals. This relationship between Taha Hussein, the critic, and Shawqi, the poet, is an ideal example of a critic who likes to shade his criticism with a spirit of tolerance that does not deny differences, but rather establishes it on a basis that always allows for dialogue.

The laziness of the school of Ahmad Shawqi and Hafeth Ibrahim is apparent in Hussein's hidden sarcasm that is due to the confinement to ancient poetic culture. It is almost certain that he expected of Shawqi more than he expected of Hafeth, due to Shawqi's Arabic culture, his early familiarity with French literature and his social status, which allowed him to travel and experience what Hafeth's modest background did not allow. Therefore, it is noted that the criticism in his book, *Hafeth and Shawqi* focuses primarily on Shawqi. This appears in Taha Hussein's objection to the introduction written by Heikal, Shawqi's friend, to the second edition of *Al-Shawqiyyat*, where Taha Hussein argues that Shawqi's most serious poetic defect is that his poetry does not reveal his personality and does not reveal his conscience.

Taha Hussein tried to impose on Shawqi's poetry his own understanding of poetry, and he did not stop at clarifying Shawqi's different concept, as well as what vital classicism might entail in special poetic values. If Hussein had done so, he would have discovered that Shawqi's poetry had a different vision of the world—a vision that may not be like his own, a vision with distinct values, and a moral dimension compared to the spiritual dimension in his vision. Both were transformed into an awareness of the circularity of movement in the universe, an awareness of the fleeting fate of man and an awareness of life as a cycle of rise and fall. There are so many striking values contained in Shawqi's poetry if we view them from this perspective. However, if we judge him from a romantic, searching standpoint and from an angle that reduces the value of poetry by revealing the personality of its author, then many aspects of Shawqi's poetry disappear before us. This is what happened with Taha Hussein's criticism of Shawqi.

Hussein described the transformation that overturned Shawqi's poetic strategy after the Spanish exile as a truly great transformation stating that he had no counterpart among poets who preceded him in Arabic literature. His traditional poetry was freed from the conditions of politics and he explored himself; thus, he was a poet who was meant to renew.

In fact, Dr Hussein was most committed to the scientific spirit and the fine art of directing criticism, so we saw him, after a while, do justice to Shawqi, saying about him, 'After he returned to Egypt from exile, he underwent a truly severe transformation, the likes of which we hardly know'. According to other poets who preceded him, he changed Arabic literature in two serious ways.

First, his traditional poetry had no political constraints, so he was freed. His poetry became an image of the whims of the people around him and the inclinations of the people, with all power and with all freedom. It was as if the people were speaking with his tongue.

Second, he explored himself, realising that he was a poet who was created to be an innovator. He accepted renewal in the last years of his life, so he introduced into the Arabic language, and into Arabic poetry in particular, a new art that no one had previously done, which was the art of poetic drama.

Whatever the case, it was enough that Shawqi had returned strength, sobriety and durability to Arabic poetry its, following Al-Baroudi, the poet who returned Arabic poetry to its early life [47 (p. 151)].

The following are excerpts of what Taha Hussein said in his book, *Hafeth and Shawqi*, about the Prince of Poets:

It is well known that despite his bitter critic, Taha Hussein also praised Shawqi during his lifetime when he concluded his article on Shawqi's poem 'Tutankhamun' by showing his great admiration, saying: 'I would be completely unable to describe the beauty of this pure, sparkling piece of Shawqi's poem. This piece in which the poet speaks to Pharaoh, as he asks him and interrogates him with great wisdom and beautiful exhortation, and puts before him these mysteries that the mind and conscience are unable to solve. Then the poet moves in the best way, jumping while you imagine that he is stepping, jumping from the era of the Pharaohs to the era in which we live, and you see him as an Egyptian poet living with us, feeling what we feel sorry for, and feeling pity for what we feel pity for' [52 (p. 98)].

Shawqi never confronted anybody in literature, and he did not quarrel or blame any of his critics. Rather, he treated them like one treats snakes, not meeting them, but capturing them from behind with the fingertips. He tempted them and provoked others against them, then he met them with a gentle smiling face, visiting with them and consulting with them as if they were people he loved. In his daily life, he had no apparent enemies; rather, all people were his loyal friends. He showed them a clear, pure page, yet behind this page were white pages and black pages. Shawqi could be read about in the newspapers, *Al-Jihad*, *Al-Itihad*, *Al-Seyasah*, *Al-Ba'kouka* and *Al-Ahram*. He could be found in the Al-Liwaa bar. Wherever he was, he was always calm, never disturbed, with a low voice that you could hardly hear without carefully listening.

This was a picture of Shawqi's nature, so why is this strange? He was born at the door of the royal palace and grew up in its shadow, spending his youth and adulthood working in the palace. He was there when the authorities of the palace were absolute or nearly absolute, when life was a constant altercation between the people who coveted freedom and the English who aggressively opposed it. Therefore, it is not surprising that Shawqi, in his literary and personal life, adopted a policy that protects its owner and guarantees both success and safety' [52 (p. 174)].

Shawqi was fluent in Turkish and proficient in French, excelling in pronunciation and comprehension. He read a lot, and his soul became assimilated to what he read and what he understood. Adding to the existing elements of his nature was a new element, French. The

language worked in his mind, imagination and his temperament, and other features grew along with his reading and life. Shawqi interacted with the Arabs in their poetry and literature, thus increasing his share of Arabic. He also interacted with the Turks in his daily life and had close contact with them, thus increasing the Turkish element in him [52 (p.179)].

Shawqi's nature was so fertile and strong that he could not taste a literary work that could be simulated unless he tried to find the simulation in it. Most of the time, he had great success in this endeavour [52 (p. 181)].

Shawqi had a brilliant talent, unlike any that Egypt had known in its Arab-Islamic era or in Arab literary history since Abu Al-Ala' Al-Ma'arri [52 (p. 182)].

At the beginning of his life, Shawqi was a selfish poet who was self-absorbed and sought pleasure and grace. Then he was an employed poet who sheltered his talents for the prince and the sultan. Later he returned to himself and returned to his people, becoming the poet of art and the poet of the people. Shawqi's poetry expanded during the later phases of his life to embrace Egypt and the rising Arab East [52 (p. 195)].

Ibrahim Abd Ul-Qader Al-Mazeni (1889-1949)

Ibrahim Abd Ul-Qader Al-Mazeni was an Egyptian critic, journalist, novelist and poet of the modern era. He was known for his sarcastic style, whether in literary writing or poetry. His background combined his Arab heritage and English literature like the other poets of the Diwan School. He entered the education field and then became a successful professional journalist, until he was appointed editor of *Al-Akhbar* newspaper. Later he became the editor of *Al-Siyasah Weekly* newspaper, then editor-in-chief of *Al-Siyasah Daily* newspaper. He was appointed president of *Al-Ittihad* newspaper and was an elected representative of the Journalists Syndicate Council in 1941.

Al-Mazeni played an influential role with Abbas Al-Aqqad and Ahmad Shukri in creating the collection Al-Diwan, the new poetic school that attacked classical poetry and laid the foundation for the modern poem as a single cohesive structure. Al-Mazni worked with Al-Aqqad in journalism, then participated with him in chapters of his critical book, *The Diwan*, in which Al-Aqqad raised the banner of the campaign against Shawqi and the traditional school of poetry.

Critics' Opinions after Shawqi's Death

Harsh criticisms, which, in some circumstances, were capable of inflicting more than one death on Shawqi, turned after his death in 1932 into forms of justice and veneration towards the Prince of Poets, for filling the world with poetry and engaging its people.

Al-Mazeni said after Shawqi's death that he was one of the most mature poets of his class, and he had the most precise and most eloquent expression. He stated that his opinion of Shawqi's poetry remained the same, which is that he had been more sensitive in the early part of his life than he was in the later years. However, in his last era, he had the most eloquent expressions, the loudest statements and a wonderful vitality. This is because, in his old age, he became convinced that composing poems in the old, traditional way was futile and invalid, so he turned to writing representative poetic narratives, and he aspired to be to Arabic literature what Shakespeare was to English literature.

'May God have mercy on Shawqi, for he was a symbol of Egypt throughout the Arab East, and my greatest belief is that his name will remain mentioned in the history of his time, no matter how much people disagreed about him' [47 (p.149)].

'Shawqi was like a rock that was not destroyed by the ibex, but rather smashed its horns. Young critics tried to climb on his shoulders to the world of fame. Had they taken another path, he would have extended to them a helping hand, but they chose a path that has many pitfalls'. It is the ethics of contemporary critics, as his friend Zaki Mubarak said.

'Yet Shawqi was the one who accustomed most of them to look at his pockets, and whenever they needed, they roamed around his poetry, groping for what was in it. Al-Rafi'i was right when he described him as having become like a thoroughbred horse competing even with his shadow. Therefore, he used to silence their tongues and bombard their pens with gifts and donations, although he knew that those mercenaries had distorted the literary criticism with the worst distortion, and turned literary facts in a hateful way, with their small shovels with which they tried to destroy rather than build' [2, p.150]

In any case, Al-Aqqad's and Al-Mazni's opinion about Shawqi changed after his death in 1932, but Dr Taha Hussein's opinion about Shawqi remained moderate. The Diwan School ended with a dispute occurring between Shukri and Al-Mazni over some literary issues. Al-Aqqad sided with Al-Mazni. Shukri stopped writing poetry after the publication of his seventh collection, *Autumn Flowers*. He retired from public life. Al-Mazni turned to writing stories and newspaper articles, and Al-Aqqad alone remained as a representative of the direction of the collection, making poetry his second interest.

SHAWQI'S CONTEMPORARIES

Sorted by year of birth.

Muhammad Ali al-Abed (1867-1939)

Muhammad Ali al-Abed, a Syrian politician and diplomat, was the first president of the Syrian Republic from 11 June 1932 to 21 December 1936, and the eighth ruler after the fall of Ottoman Syria. Al-Abed studied in Damascus, which he left as a child, and in Beirut, Istanbul and Paris, and worked in the Ottoman Foreign Ministry and was appointed ambassador to the United States. After the coup against Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1908), the family moved around Europe until the end of World War I, when they settled in Egypt before returning to Damascus after the start of the mandate.

Part of the Speech of His Excellency Muhammad Ali Al-Abed, President of the Syrian Republic:

'Gentlemen,

The Syrian nation, through its expression of its emotions on the day it lost the greatest Arab poet, Ahmad Shawqi, demonstrated its value to great men, and that it does not weep for the benefactors except for those whose benevolence extended to the group. And what benevolence is greater than the benevolence of Shawqi, the greatest poet of this era?

Bereavement for the Prince of Poets is not limited to Egypt, but his sermons are the sermons of every Arab land, because his poetry was noble in its aims, calling people to goodness and

uniting the scattered passions with his wisdom. Through him our world became more literary, more charming and more amazing, and every one of his melodies contains something that captures the hearts and minds.

I remember two of Shawqi's qualities among the qualities he possessed: his love for his craft and his dedication to mastering it. I learned this about him when we were students, receiving education at the same institute in Paris. We were in close contact, as close as one's peer is with another. Some of our friends would object to Shawqi spending his time composing poetry, but the brilliant poet did not care about the objection. Rather, he would always perfect his poetry, study and delve deeply into his studies. It would never have occurred to anyone that this young Egyptian man, who was distracted by poetry morning and evening, would carry within him a poet whose fame would spread throughout the East and the West.

Today, all Arab people weep for his genius, because he fed them from the spring of his sweet eloquence for about fifty years, and taught them from his knowledge what they did not know, and made them hear a new chord and a strange melody, so in his work was eternal glory for him and his nation.

Shawqi was fond of poetry and was fond of improving it, and of the high culture he received in Egypt and France. With his long experiences and farsightedness, his art was honored with all honor.

I don't think there is anyone among us who hasn't been enchanted by Shawqi's poem, which begins with:

خدعوها بقولهم حسناء والغواني يغرهن الثناء

They deceived her by saying she is beautiful,
while the beauties are deceived by praise.

This unique poem, which has been narrated and understood by everyone who loves poetry and music, was composed by Shawqi in Paris when he was nineteen years old. If he was able to recite poetry in this style when he was a young man, then where did his sublime talents take him, and what did his brilliant mind open up to him in his final years? He was learning every day what poetry should be, and he was always exaggerating in his elegance in its meanings and structures. It is not surprising after that that the world turned to him, so he lived in luxury and comfort by his hard work, and died honored and respected.

It is strange in Shawqi's biography that he remained proficient until the end of his days. The years did not change the beauty of his poetry, but rather increased its strength and tenderness, contrary to the habit of most poets in the past and present. We saw the French poet Corneille compose his most beautiful dramatic novels in his youth.

Shawqi is an embodied example of Eastern genius, in which his care for the art of poetry grew, and he made it a tool for renaissance, and a path to refinement and education. We hope that our nation will have from his precious heritage what it can use to educate its sons and daughters.

If we are grieved by the loss of the immortal man, our consolation is in what we have learned from his literature, and in what the days will pass on from his literature and poetry, praying that every Arab will have mercy on him' [53].

Muhammad Sabri Al-Sorbouny (1894-1978)

One of the great historians in the modern history of Egypt. In 1914, Muhammad Sabri Al-Sorbouny travelled to France and enrolled at the Sorbonne University, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Modern History, and a State Doctorate in Arts in 1924. As the first Egyptian to obtain this degree, he was nicknamed 'the Sorbouny'. Dr Al-Sorbouny left a great treasure of books and historical writings.

When Shawqi returned to Egypt, he published the first part of his collection, *Shawqiyyat in 1898*. Dr Al-Sorbouny collected the poems that were not included in this collection and made a new collection of them in two volumes, which he called the *Unknown Shawqiyat (Al-Shawqiyat Al-Majhoula)*.

Shawqi published the first and second parts of his collection *Al-Shawqiyat* during his lifetime, while the third and fourth parts were published after his death, in 1936 and 1943. The first edition of *Al-Shawqiyat Al-Majhoula* was published in 1961, and several editions were issued after that.

The book includes more than 130 poems, about 4,000 lines of poetry, in addition to about 1,000 other verses and scattered pieces, as well as 60 other articles and pieces of prose, none of which were published in Shawqi's collections or his works that were printed during his life or after his death.

The Unknown Shawqiyat collected poetry by Shawqi from 33 newspapers and journals, most notably: *Al-Ahram*, *Al-Mu'ayyad*, *Al-Waqa'i Al-Masrya*, *Al-Liwaa*, *Al-Musawwar*, *Al-Resala*, *Al-Hilal*, *Al-Seyassah Weekly* and others.

The Sorbouny stated in an introduction to the first part of the book, that if God had not helped him find that treasure, a large part of Shawqi's poetry would have remained buried forever, especially since many of his poems and pieces were published in newspapers without his signature or with a borrowed signature. 'We have uncovered this last, hidden poetry, just as we have uncovered the poetry that was hidden in the depths of old newspapers and magazines'.

The first part of *The Unknown Shawqiyyat* is divided into three sections: the introduction, which sheds light on the poet's life and literary upbringing, the first section, which includes Shawqi's anonymous poems that were published between 1888 and 1899, and the second section, which includes the poems that were published between 1900 and 1903.

The second part is divided into four sections, which complement the first sections. These include the third section for poems published between 1904 and 1908, the fourth section, for poems published between 1909 and 1914, and the fifth section. for poems published between 1917 and 1932, including many additional poems added to this section, which should have been included in the previous sections according to their dates. The sixth section is devoted to musical poetry.

Al-Sorbouny wrote that the *Egyptian Gazette* published Shawqi's first poem in April 7, 1888. The article said, 'This poem came to us from the pen of the noble young man Ahmad Shawqi, from the Translation Department of the Khedive School of Law, in eulogy for the late Prince Hassan Pasha'. Then Al-Sorbouny mentioned the beginning of the poem, followed by mention of additional poems, which indicated that his poetry has not been interrupted or slowed down [54 (p. 7)].

Muhammad Al-Sorbouny stated that many students at Al-Azhar did not believe that a graduate of French schools like Ahmad Shawqi could recite such fine poetry, such as his poem about Khedive Tawfiq. Shawqi composed it before travelling to France, like his poem 'The Major Incidents in the Nile Valley', which he delivered at the Orientalists' Conference in Geneva after returning from his studies in France. Both poems, Al-Sarbouny says, were memorised by the students, yet they used to say that, his friend, Sheikh Zaki Sanad, helped him compose these poems [19 (p.14)].

Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafi'i (1880-1937)

Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafi'i was an Egyptian writer, author and poet who reached a high position in contemporary and ancient Arabic literature. His genius and creativity were evident in the field of essays, which Al-Rafi'i devoted himself to in the last part of his life.

'Shawqi's poetry is distinguished by the strength of its rhetoric, the splendor of its music, its breadth of horizons, and its deep understanding of historical events, ancient and modern. He has followed the example of ancient poets and often defeated them. He also brought some innovation to Arabic poetry through what he borrowed from Western poets and from European culture' [14].

The following excerpts are from his book, *Wahy Al-Qalam* (The Pen's Inspiration).

It seems to me that Egypt chose this man, above all of its people, to place in this man its speaking spirit. It presented to him what it did not present for anyone else, and helped him with what was not available to anyone else. It endowed him with power and empowerment and the means and characteristics of leadership in accordance with the level of a nation that wants to be a poetic nation, not according to the level of the man himself. Through him alone, Egypt was able to save poetry and literature to history.

Shawqi—this is the name that was in literature like the sun from the East: whenever it rises in one place, it rises in every place, and when it is mentioned in a country in the Arab world, the meaning of its name expands and refers to all of Egypt, as if the Nile were mentioned or the Pyramid or Cairo. Synonyms refer not to the status of the language but to its majesty.

Shawqi was a man who lived until he was complete, and that is the proof of history that has chosen Egypt. Evidence of the genius in him is the moving secret that does not stop, does not tire and does not interrupt his working system. He emanates the sense of a bee in a garden, while his poetry grows as time does. He did not lag behind in his time, and did not drop when his goals were farthest away. It is as if he were with time in a single context, and as if his poetry was a history of speech that developed in stages of growth and was not frozen or regressed. The imagination of the owner remained until the end of his life in managing the sky like arrows

of clouds, clouds that were abundant with lightning and full of rain pouring down on one side and filling up on the other.

This man escaped from the history of literature in favour of Egypt alone, like rain falling from its clouds floating in the air. Through him, Egypt became the master of the Arab world in poetry [55 (pp. 279-280)].

They tried to overthrow Shawqi repeatedly, but he showed them his dust and moved on. Some came back to wash their eyes and see through them that Shawqi was part of the Egyptian soul, in the same position as the glory written for it in history. I was once talking to my friend, the profound writer Farah Antoun, the owner of Al-Jami'ah, who was very impressed by Shawqi. He said to me, 'Shawqi is now on the horizon of kings, not on the horizon of poets!'

Shawqi was jealous of himself, like a noble old horse competing with his own shadow. He opposed his predecessors with his poetry as if they were with him, and competed with his contemporaries to make it appear that they were not with him. He also competed with himself to make Shawqi more poetic than Shawqi [55 (pp. 282-283)].

Shawqi was assisted in poetry by his free time for 44 years; his mind was not divided. He had an abundant livelihood, ample prestige, and high status, and in his hands were collections of Arabic, European, Turkish, and Persian poetry. He was devoted to the activities of life, without which there would be no soul to poetry. He travelled, and moved around the lands, mixing with people and reviewing nature, permeating it with his sights between Andalusia and Istanbul, supported by his money and his free time [55 (p. 284)].

Shawqi was the first poet to celebrate the history of Egypt and the first to expand poetic narrations, writing six novels. He is the author of wonderful descriptive verses and this is his strongest talent, which made me believe that God Almighty bestows beautiful literature upon individuals who are distinguished by the beauty and strength of their souls.

'O Egypt, your poet who was trying to bring the present generation into the time that has not yet come has died. If this time, full of its high arts and literature, comes and you mention the glory of your past poetry, let your teachers say on that day: This past was a poet named Shawqi!' [55 (p. 295)].

An incident would occur, and Shawqi would send his poem out loudly, and it would barely appear in Egypt before the entire Arab world converge around it, recognizing it as the finest and best poetry. It would then cross over and create a strong and close mental connection between Arabic writers. Then it would cross again and become an emotion that brought hearts together according to its meaning. Ultimately, it would rise above all of this, and Egypt would have leadership over Arabic poetry.

This is strange, as if it were the magic of time when the world separates the outstanding genius from those who resemble him or compete with him. What is more astonishing is that I have not seen Arabic poetry that describes Egyptian antiquities as well as Shawqi's poetry, so much so that I ask myself, 'Do some great things choose to describe them and interpret their greatness, just as a beautiful woman chooses her lover and the one who tells of her beauty?'

This is why some poets' names are equal to the name of a kingdom. If you say Shakespeare and England, they are of the same precious greatness, and so are Shawqi and Egypt [55 (pp. 297-298)].

Abdul-Aziz Al-Bishri (1886-1943)

Abdul-Aziz Al-Bishri was an Egyptian writer who studied at Al-Azhar and worked in several positions, including the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo. He wrote in journals and collected the articles he wrote in books.

Al-Bishri reported that the greatest position that Shawqi was appointed to during the Khedive's rule was the management of the Frankish pen, although his influence and authority far exceeded this position. He achieved favour with the ruler that nobody had previously attained. His house (Karmat Ibn Hani) was a place for those in need, and a source of intercession from all sides, both young and old. For most rulers, Shawqi's reference was a judgment.

Until that time, Egypt was part of the Ottoman Empire, so Shawqi often visited Istanbul. Hardly would the summer arrive without Shawqi travelling there, and he would receive from the rulers reverence and welcome in a place of dignity. One year, news of his arrival reached the Caliph, so he ordered that as long as Shawqi resided there, he would be a guest at the caliphate's shrine. He was also granted the first rank of the second category, which is above the ranking of those who held the title of Pasha. He was also granted great honors from Attica, from Germany (before the war) and from the Syrian state. Shawqi had a passion for tourism in the West and the countries of the near East, but in his later years, he limited his tourism to the Syrian and Lebanese countries, where he received the greatest sympathy and honor from their notables and scholars.

In 1927, a conference was held in Egypt to honor Shawqi, in which a number of Egyptian men, scholars, and writers participated, and a number of prominent writers from the Arab countries attended. The honoring ceremony was under the patronage of His Majesty King Fouad I. Shawqi lived with a venerable name and high status. When he died, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with a group of prominent people of virtue and literature, held a memorial party for him, to which senior scholars and writers in the Arab countries were invited. His Majesty the King honored the gathering with a representative on his behalf. The concert was held at the Royal Opera House in December of 1932.

Shawqi was extremely intelligent and very modest. He was not at ease in conversations unless there were only one or two friends present. Perhaps he was like this, because the fluency of his tongue did not match the eloquence of his pen nor did it meet the demands of his mind. He hated entering into crowds of people, and alienated himself from witnessing such a gathering. He confined himself to a corner of a club or a stadium. He was calm and quiet; you would not see him admonish anyone and you would rarely see him provoked by anger. He was very kind, compassionate and very merciful. He hated discussing tragedies and avoided seeing them. However, despite this, he satisfied himself with patience in the face of harm and trained himself to be satisfied with destiny as it occurred. If something unfortunate transpired, his mind would extract goodness from the occurrence. If he was unable to do so, he would eventually accept that God Almighty had pushed away what was most hateful.

Shawqi had a strong belief in God Almighty, His angels, His messengers, the Last Day and destiny. He did not record a slip of the tongue or a stumble in this regard. But despite the intensity of his faith, Shawqi in his youth enjoyed the pleasures of the world, spending extravagantly on whatever he liked. As he grew older, however, he limited his enjoyment to watching movies and attending singing parties. He defended the state of Islam and praised prophet Muhammad. This gave him the greatest hope for a generous outcome and a good ending. He said in his poem ('Nahj al-Burda'):

If my sins were too great to be forgiven.
I have hope in God, who will place me in the best of shelter.

Shawqi, despite his exceptional talent, was very devoted to reading books in general, literature books in particular and especially poetry collections. There is also no doubt that his mastery of the French language, and his extensive knowledge of Western literature and rhetoric contributed to his competence and excellence in the art of rhetoric.

Among the factors that had a clear impact on Shawqi's poetry were his upbringing in the king's palace, his position among the princes' entourage and their followers and his involvement in the most intimate political causes in Egypt, whether they came into contact with the occupying country (England) or with the country that was in power at that time (Turkey). Shawki travelled frequently to Western and Near East countries and had interactions with different types of people. His knowledge of their character, morals, traditions and customs and the images of nature that were evident in these countries were not available to many poets.

There is no doubt that Shawqi was one of the greatest poets in the entire Arab world. In fact, even some of his critics connect him to the most prominent poets of the most brilliant and eloquent eras of Arabic. Shawqi excelled in every art, explored every purpose and achieved every goal. He excelled and outclassed the others. He competed with the early and late poets, and he was neither short nor backward. For a generation and a half, he has been writing important poetry. Not a single event occurred in the country without a bit of his poetry, and not a single event occurred in any part of the world that he did not write about.

One of the characteristics of Shawqi's poetry is that he may praise, lament or act other than in the poetic arts, but he deviates from what is on his path to refer to a proverb or create wisdom for the benefit of the people. He has a very long breadth, reaching one hundred lines or more without hesitation. His poem, 'The Greatest Events in the Nile Valley' was 290 lines, most of which were composed in poetry of chosen words [56]

'On this day two years ago, it was announced that the nightingale had fallen silent after its long chanting and singing, and that the flowers had withered after shining and blooming. The star had fallen and no longer shined, and the stream had sunk and was no longer able to glitter with water' [56].

Shawqi died, and if he had been like other people, his death would not have been so serious. There may be a man who dies, and there is no difference between his death and his life. But Shawqi's death is different. Have you seen the river when it dries up and the rain when it is

withheld? We ask this for the travellers when the star catches up with the setting and the roads have diverged and the paths have different heads.

Shawqi was one of the great blessings that God bestowed upon this country and upon all of the Arabic people. His death is a tragedy whose loss is felt by every person who appreciates the splendor of thought and celebrates the finest images of beauty.

If God Almighty had sent feeling into the manifestations of nature and enabled it to speak, then those who would have participated in commemorating Shawqi would have included the deep sea, the steep mountain, the revolving planet, the confused and wondering star, the wood when it blossomed, and the flower when it lightened and shone, and all the songs of the cooing daughters would have gathered to mourn his death.

Shawqi did not die, and those like Shawqi never die, but rather they continue in life throughout the generations. This is Shawqi, alive; he strengthened life in his powerful rhetoric, and this clear, sweet, and enlightening rhetoric will continue to be sought by the people of Arabism as long as they are destined to live in this world [56].

Fares Al-Khoury (1877-1962)

Fares Al-Khoury was a Syrian scholar and nationalist leader. He was one of the founding fathers of the Syrian Republic and one of the leaders of the National Bloc that fought the French mandate. He assumed the presidency of the Syrian parliament and became Prime Minister in the 1930s and 1940s, returning to the position during the independence era in 1954. He is the founder of the Syrian Ministry of Finance, one of the founders of the Faculty of Law at Damascus University, the founder of the Syrian Bar Association and one of the most prominent drafters of the Syrian constitution. In addition, Al-Khoury was one of the founders of the United Nations in 1945. He is a former member of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies and was a representative of the city of Damascus in the Syrian Parliament from 1936 to 1947.

The Bereavement of the Arabs:

Al-Khoury stated that most men in the East reach their level of glory and the heights of their prosperity during their youth and middle age, and there are few among them who continue their journey steadfastly into old age, especially if they reach the highest level above their peers on the ladder of their advancement. Laziness takes over, and they no longer see in themselves the need for seriousness and work after people have acknowledged their superiority and brilliance.

Ahmad Shawqi escaped this restriction, and deviated from this rule, and his ambition remained on the rise and his talent continued to flourish, indifferent to the decline of his physical strength and the deterioration of his health. He was not arrogant about the title Prince of Poets, nor did he hesitate to embark on difficult projects by composing great poetic novels in a style that no Arab poet preceding him had done. These are the miracles that his brilliant mind produced after age 60, filling the covers of poetry collections and breathing new life into theatres, singing halls, music gatherings and gatherings of wisdom and literature. If someone else had achieved this rank, perhaps he would have been satisfied with it, then smashed his compass and retired to rest.

Since the time of Hassan (poet of prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him), poets have visited Damascus, enjoying the hospitality of its people, their warm welcome and their appreciation for the role of literature. This immortal city was and still is a good breeding ground for the masters of poetry at every age. However, we do not find a poet other than Shawqi who has dedicated immortal poems to the city, and dressed it in garments from the product of his lofty imagination that have lasted forever from its gardens and groves. If we were to collect everything that has been said about Damascus in these 14 centuries, we would not find it comparable to a single section of Shawqi's poem or his rhyme describing its glories, reviewing its history, and awakening the slumbering of the pride of its inhabitants and the chivalry of its sons.

Shawqi added to its immortality in the folds of history another immortality in the pages of high literature and lasting poetry. He had such affection for this dear Levantine country, and love for its corners and its inhabitants, that he considered it a second homeland, placing it on an equal level with Egypt. So, if the Arabs were the most affected by the death of Shawqi, then the Levant, after Egypt, were the first to receive this respect, and the most deserving of acknowledging his kindness and immortalising his memory in their hearts.

If the horizon were expanded for theorising between Shawqi and the geniuses of the ancient poets one by one, we would not lack evidence of his preference and his superiority over all who came before. And the giants of literature must confront this comparison and bring us what is rich and convincing [57 (p. 79)].

Muhammad Hussein Heikal (1888-1956)

Muhammad Hussein Heikal was an Egyptian poet, writer and politician. Born in Al-Mansoura, Egypt, he studied law at the Khedive Law School in Cairo and graduated in 1909. He obtained a doctorate in law from the Sorbonne University in France in 1912. Upon his return to Egypt, he worked as a lawyer for ten years and also worked in journalism. He was a member of the Committee of Thirty that drafted the 1923 Constitution, the first constitution issued in independent Egypt according to the declaration of 28 February 1922. When the Constitutional Liberal Party established a weekly newspaper, *Al-Seyassah Weekly*, Heikal was appointed to be its editor-in-chief in 1926. In 1941, he was chosen as Vice-President of the Constitutional Liberal Party and assumed the presidency of the party in 1943. He also represented Saudi Arabia in signing the Arab League Charter in 1945, and headed the Egyptian delegation to the United Nations more than once.

In the introduction to *Al-Shawqiyat*, (Shawqi's poetry collection) First Edition (1898), (out of print), Dr Muhammad Hussein Heikal wrote that although Shawqi studied in Egypt and completed his studies in Europe, and was greatly influenced by the European milieu, European life, and European poetry, his influence in the environment remained apparent in his life and poetry, just as his influence remained apparent in the European environment as well. It becomes apparent when reviewing the parts of his collection that it is as if there are two very different men. There seems to be no connection between the two, except that both are poets by nature whose poetry reaches the highest heavens, and both are Egyptians whose love for Egypt reaches the point of sanctification and worship.

Other than these characteristics, the two men are different. One is a believer who fills himself with faith, a Muslim who sanctifies Islam and makes the Caliphate state a sanctuary over which its affairs and events overflow with the inspiration of poetry in every idea and every imagination. In contrast, the other is a worldly man who finds enjoyment and bliss in life and maintains the best hopes and goals of life; he is tolerant, accommodating his human self and accommodating all of existence with it, careless of people and their wishes and innovative in language in word and meaning [30].

Shawqi was born a poet and wrote poetry as a young man. He seemed to find a field for poetry in every aspect of life. He found inspiration for his poetry in a missing cat, in a small child, and in all parts of life and nature. He lived in Paris amid life, love and people. He soon returned and contacted the former Khedive Abbas, worked in the palace and became the prince's poet until the restrictions of his position burdened his mistress, and the circle of his imagination was defined by the limits of the palace and its owner. The feast of sitting is coming, so he must recite a poem in which he praises the Khedive and his sitting on the couch of Egypt. Birthday is coming, so he must recite a poem in which he praises the Khedive and the good fortune of his birth. The Khedive is intending to perform Hajj, so he must talk about Abbas and his companions and the rejoicing of the House of God and the grave of his Prophet through Abbas's visit to them. Abbas was in an ongoing dispute with Lord Cromer, the representative of England in Egypt, and he had no choice but to seek help from Sultan Abdul Hamid, the greatest ruler of Egypt. Thus, was his duty as the prince's poet, on every occasion that required seeking the Caliph's satisfaction and sympathy [26 (p. 420)].

'Shawqi has an undisputed position among Arab poets of all eras'. [26 (p. 425)].

Ahmad Abdul-Wahab Abu Al-Izz

Ahmad Abdul-Wahab Abu Al-Izz was the private secretary of the Prince of Poets, who wrote about many personal characteristics of Ahmad Shawqi. He was born in a village in Damietta Governorate in Egypt and died in Cairo, although his dates of birth and death are unknown. He spent his life in Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. He memorised the Holy Qur'an in the village elementary school and obtained a primary certificate. He worked as secretary to Shawqi, and after his death he became responsible for the Shawqi Department and was in charge of everything related to the books and publications of the Prince of Poets. He was also religiously active, and built a mosque in his village. He also delivered Friday sermons at a mosque in the Ain Shams suburb of Cairo, in addition to his cultural participation in radio programs and interviews about Shawqi. Ahmad Abu Al-Izz spent 12 years working as secretary for Shawqi, and he published an important book about the life of the poet.

The book is a record covering the time of his return from Spanish exile in 1920 until his death on October 14, 1932. It reveals details of Shawqi's life, the secretary's feelings towards his master, and the intimate relationship that linked them. The secretary did not leave Shawqi except during sleep times and he was allowed to stay with Shawqi permanently. He would meet him every morning and would not leave him until an hour or two after midnight, especially in Shawqi's last years when he followed him like his shadow. Abu Al-Izz testified that Shawqi did not live a single hour for himself, but rather was always working in literary and intellectual pursuits directed towards the benefit of millions in all Arabic countries.

The Prince of Poets died in his bed in his house (Karmat Ibn Hani) overlooking the Nile, after midnight on October 14, 1932. His death saddened the entire Arab culture, even those who attacked him as a creative symbol of the old and thought he must make way for the new promising generation. Hundreds of articles and poems poured in eulogising the great deceased, who deserved the title of Prince of Poets. Everyone was quick to write their memories and prepare books about him, but the fastest of them to publish a book was his private secretary, Abu Al-Izz, who spent twelve years in the company of Shawqi who loved him, cared for him and chose him to accompany him for all those years, the effects of which were deeply engraved in the conscience of the loving secretary. Thus, it was natural for him to hasten to publish his book, *The Document (Twelve Years in the Company of the Prince of Poets)*. Abu Al-Izz finished his book on November 11, 1932, that is, one month and several days after the death of his shepherd, as an outlet for his grief. The book was written out of loyalty to his companionship and as a record of the facts and circumstances related to history.

‘One of God’s gifts was that the conditions were prepared for me to join the service of the Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi, and that my name will be crowned with the title of secretary to this great man’. This success that I have been blessed with, has allowed me to be close to his greatness and to be given a place as the holder of his secrets and the writer of his inspiration’.

Every day I found him more sympathetic to me and more approachable than the day before, until he said to me on the day of my father’s death, consoling me: ‘Would you not accept me as your father from today?’ Thus, I accepted this unique person as a rare companion [58 (p.5)].

Shawqi composed poetry at any time and in any place. He composed it while sitting, walking, travelling, and residing. He composed it alone and with friends or visitors. He also composed it when he was happy or when he was sad.

One time, ten years ago, Shawqi returned from his home in Matariya and found me in the office at 11:30 a.m. He dictated to me 28 lines from his poem, the beginning of which is, ‘O sister of Joshua, tell us’. Then he said to me, ‘Do not leave, because if something comes to me, I will need to dictate it to you’. He then went out and walked around the building, returning every few minutes. He would come back and dictate five, six, or seven verses to me. Finally, he entered the office and sat on a chair and began to pass his left palm over his head. I understood that he was secretly writing, because he often did that while writing. Then he said, ‘Write’. So, I wrote and wrote. We looked at the time and it was one o’clock in the afternoon. He said, ‘Enough, give me what you wrote, because I have an appointment now with Mr Dawoud’. I presented it to him after I had counted its lines and found that there were 84 lines [58 (pp.18-19)].

During his illness, he was mostly at home, and sometimes I would read books to him, and sometimes he would tell me about his illness and the symptoms he felt and at other times he would dictate what he was writing in his four drama plays, *Cambir*, *Ali Bey*, and *The Miserly and Lady Huda*. He used to work on all four simultaneously, dictating to me, saying, ‘Write about Cambyse’s novel’, and then when he finished, he would say, ‘Write about Ali Bey’, etc.

Sometimes he finished dictating and said, ‘Wait a little longer; perhaps something will come’. It often happened that a visitor or visitors would come to us and he would talk to them. When the visit ended, he turned to me and said, ‘Write’ He speeded up his dictation, and I quickly wrote,

as if he had not been interrupted; as if he had not been busy receiving guests, but rather as if he was never interrupted from his train of thought. Once he noticed my astonishment at his ability to compose poetry, and he said, 'Do not think that my talking to people prevents me from my work?' A friend of his told me that he had stayed with him one night at the Buffet des Labromines on the bridge of Qasr al-Nile, when he began working on the Nile poem. He would ride a horse chariot for half an hour and walk around the Zamalek Island for a few minutes. Then he would return to the table where he was sitting and write ten or twelve verses, and so on, until the poem ended in one night, except for one line that he was unable to complete until two days later'.

A few years ago, he visited the tomb of Saladin in Damascus and returned to Dummar, so he began composing, and Muhammad Abd Al-Wahhab and Najeeb al-Rayes were with him. It did not take more than an hour before the poem, which began with 'Qum Najy Jullaqa', was completed.

While we were reading the rehearsals of *Majnun Layla or Cleopatra*, he would often say to me, 'add this' under such-and-such line, and he would dictate four or five lines, and whenever we attended a performance of one of his poetic dramas, he would tell me to watch the actors. If I heard a mistake from one of them, write it down, and get the name of the actor so that he could point out his mistake the next day. I would often miss hearing the mistakes, so he would direct me to them. Then my astonishment would increase when the curtain fell and he would dictate to me more than twenty lines for one of his other novels or for a poem. I told him that I was astonished when I saw him eager to hear the actors' delivery at the time he was composing, and I once asked him about that, and he said the mistake alerts me because it is like a nail in my ear [58 (pp. 20-22)].

Shawqi was jovial. He met each of his visitors with a smile and offered them cigarettes. He enjoyed answering all of their questions.

He used to give alms a lot, but hated that his hand touched the hand of the beggar, especially if he saw that it was dirty. He often charged me to hand money to the beggar, and at the first opportunity, he told me to cleanse my hand with cologne.

He did not like receiving much praise from a visitor, nor did he like a visitor who prolonged his visit, causing him to wish that they would not return [58 (p. 75)].

He loved beauty and tended to it carefully, whether it was in human, animals or in plants. He would stand in front of a child looking at him, and I would notice the pleasure that he felt looking at the child's face, manifesting innocence, love and tenderness. Perhaps his admiration for the child would increase, and he would bend over and play with him, just as a righteous father plays with his little child when he sees him.

Likewise, he admired the beauty in calligraphy, so if a letter came to him, he would look at it, and if the handwriting was poor, he would ask me to read it and keep it and remind him of it later, even if the letter was from a friend. When the handwriting was good, he would read it himself and praise its author, and he might carry the letter for days in his pocket, returning to read it more than once, even if it was a request.

One day we had occasion to discuss public taste. He said that there were five things about the French that made him appreciate them and look at them with veneration when he first entered their country: their appreciation for geniuses, their cleanliness, their love of order, their kindness to animals, and their lack of backbiting in their gatherings. He said there was no difference between their rich and poor in respecting these things [58 (pp. 80-81)].

Shawqi had a very strong memory, rarely forgetting anything. We might mention some trivial issues to him, and after a long time had passed, he would bring up the issues, repeating all the things that had been said in connection to the subject. We would have completely forgotten these things, because we would not attach any importance to them. He would remember the name of a farmer on his estate or a tenant whose name was mentioned in front of him once, despite the large number of farmers and tenants and the fact that their names often changed.

It is worth noting here that he was very careful about managing his business, handling his money, and supervising its disposal, to the point that some of his friends were surprised at this ability and how his financial economics could accompany the talent of poetry. Some of them described this, by saying, 'Shawqi has one foot in heaven and another on earth' [58 (p.85)].

His memory was remarkable and he would memorise linguistic terms and their sources. He would sometimes order me to review a word, so I would take the first dictionary I could find, and if I could not find this word, I would tell him. He would ask me which dictionary I looked in. I would respond, for example, *Al-Munajid*, and he would say, 'No, it is not in there. It is in *Aqrab Al-Mawared*, and it occurs in such-and-such chapter'. He would then repeat everything that was said about this word, from its origin, derivation, and everything related to it. I would open the closest resource and find everything that said in the text. This was often repeated until I thought he knew the language dictionaries by heart. I would ask him who he wanted we to check these terms, and he would say, 'I am only asking for more verification and reassurance of the correctness of what I say'.

However, I also saw him, on many occasions, leave things of value and danger, and I would question how he never forgot small things, but could forget such significant things., I spoke to him once about this, and he said that he did not actually forget, but would pretend to forget for certain reasons, and he explained to me these reasons, as shown in the following incident.

Shawqi would assigned a person to complete a job, and the assigned person may not have wanted to do what he was asked. The person would apologise for not completing the task, and Shawqi would indicate that he had completely forgotten about the matter. When the person left, he turned to me and said, 'I was sympathetic because I felt that he was in pain, so I told him that I had forgotten'. I knew from that day that this was one of the reasons why my master pretended to forget [58 (pp. 86-87)].

On 12 October 1932, he said to me, 'My health condition is strange, and there is no better condition for me than death, for there is comfort in it, and I am not afraid of it now except my fear of my children's discomfort'. Then he looked at me and said, 'I have recommended you to everyone, so be at ease'. Then he said, 'There is something I will tell Ali about today'. He was immediately moved and his eyes filled with tears. I wanted to save him from this sorrow and hastened to change the conversation [58 (p. 124)].

Kamel Al-Shennawi (1908-1965)

Kamel Al-Shennawi was an Egyptian poet and journalist. He worked in journalism with Dr Taha Hussein at *Al-Wadi* newspaper. He was known for the tenderness of his singing poetry.

Parts of his speech at the Ahmad Shawqi Festival in 1958 included the following memories of Shawqi:

Al-Shennawi told of a meeting that he thought impossible. He visited Mr. Zaki Tulaimat in the Azbakiya Park Theatre. It was 11:00 a.m. I found him in the outer courtyard, talking to an old man, wearing a wide coat. His hands were trembling, as were his hands and lips. When he looked at me, Zaki Tulaimat called me by name, introduced me to Shawqi, and described me as a literary poet, and stated that I knew all of the most beautiful parts of Arabic poetry. Shawqi said that he had read some of my verses that he liked. Then he asked me, 'What have you memorised of my poetry?' I responded, 'All of your poetry!' He laughed and said, 'Then you know my poetry better than me! I have only memorised a few verses of my poetry'.

I recited to Shawqi many of his poems, and he praised my memory and predicted occurrences to me. But Shawqi was a poet, not a prophet!

Shawqi was asked to compose a poem about Omar Al-Mukhtar, a great Libyan Arab leader who fought the Italians who colonised his country when he was 90 years old, and the battles were the battles of legends. Omar Al-Mukhtar fell captive to the Italians, and they sentenced him to death and hanged him. The Arab people decided to hold a memorial ceremony for him in Cairo, and the program included a poem by Shawqi. Twenty-four hours before the scheduled celebration, Shawqi told us that he had not yet composed the poem. On the morning of the day scheduled for the celebration, Shawqi called his secretary, Ahmed Abdul-Wahab, and dictated the entire poem to him. Then he handed it to me and asked me to read it.

I lived with Shawqi while he composed his poem 'Gandhi', and this poem only took him two hours to write. Tawfiq Diab, owner of *Al-Jihad* newspaper, called him and told him that the newspaper had prepared roses to present to the great leader as he passed through Egypt on his way to London on the ship. Shawqi said that he was now writing a poem in tribute to Gandhi. Tawfiq Diab said that he was pleased to send to Gandhi a Shawqi poem along with the bouquet. After two hours, Shawqi finished his poem [59 (p. 251)].

Shawqi Daif (1910-2005)

Shawqi Daif was a prominent Egyptian writer, linguist, and critic, head of the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo and a professor at Cairo University, from where he earned his doctorate. Daif held a number of academic positions, including chair of the Arabic Language Department at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. In 1968, he was elected a member of the Arabic Language Academy, known as the Academy of the Immortals, and in 1988 he became its Secretary-General. In 1996, he became president of the Union of Arab Scientific Language Academies. Daif wrote over 50 books on the history of Arabic criticism, rhetoric, grammar, language and Quranic interpretation. His most prominent work is a ten-volume encyclopedia entitled *History of Arabic Literature*, one of the most comprehensive works written in the history of Arabic literature. Daif was honored in a number of Arab capitals. In Egypt, he received the State Appreciation Award in Literature in 1979 and the Mubarak Award, the highest Egyptian award, in 2003. He also received the King Faisal International Prize in Arabic Literature in 1983.

In his book *Shawqi, Poet of the Modern Time*, Dr Shawqi Daif the famous literary critic, presented his opinions about Ahmad Shawqi.

‘Shawqi is the most brilliant poet in the history of modern Arabic literature, due to the multiplicity of his artistic aspects and the diversity of his literary influences. He filled his period with his lyrical poems and connected them with his dramatic plays. Whenever he published a poem, it became the talk of newspapers and literary seminars, and the same was true when he created a play or drama’ [60, (p. 5)].

After returning from exile, Shawqi became somewhat of a democrat living with his people and the Arab people. This was evident when he closed his house and vineyard in Matariya, and built a new vineyard in Giza. He devoted himself to his private life, and his various outings on the Nile and in the pyramids. In one of his outings, he composed his famous poem: ‘O Sphinx, the age has been long for you, and you have reached the furthest point of life on earth’.

He built a house in Alexandria that he called ‘The Diver's Pearl’ and frequently travelled there in the summer and winter. He used to travel to Paris to see his two sons, Ali and Hussein, while they were studying there. He also travelled often to Syria and Lebanon.

His fame had spread far and wide, and wherever he went, receptions were held for him. His house was a forum for writers, poets, and prominent men of his time. In 1926, Tagore, the great Indian poet, visited him. Rarely would an Arab leader come to Egypt without visiting Shawqi's house. Among those who visited it were Is'aaf Al-Nashashibi, a Palestinian writer, and Sayyid Al-Tha'alibi, the Tunisian leader. [60 (p. 37)]

Shawqi achieved all the literary glory he had aspired to, and during that time he was connected to the people of the Arab countries and their new life after their national renaissance. He participated with the Syrians in their various national revolutions and recorded these revolutions in wonderful poetry. He did not miss an opportunity to praise an Arab leader or an Arab movement without noting the hopes of the Arabs and the injustice of the colonizers and the suffering they had endured.

Thus, he became the hope of the youth in Egypt, Syria and elsewhere, and his poetry was repeated everywhere its people spoke Arabic. He remained on the throne of the emirate of Arabic poetry for the rest of his life, and still today his name resounds in the ears of the Arabs like magic hymns.

It seems that Shawqi had no wish that time had not fulfilled. He was even able to choose the most wonderful voice in Egypt to compose his songs for him. Since 1924, Mohamed Abdul-Wahab began to follow him like his shadow in his vineyard in Giza, and on his trips to Paris, Lebanon and Damascus.

His life at that time was pure bliss and enjoyment, and his secretary, Ahmad Abdul-Wahab, wrote about his idyllic life since 1920, telling of how he walked on roads filled with roses and basil, and how he sat in fragrant atmospheres and how he drank life from pure cups. He revolved in an orbit of joy and cheerfulness to which no poet could ask for more. He moved

from café to café, from restaurant to restaurant, from his imagination to the cinema, and from one party to another. His atmosphere consisted of ecstasy and singing [60 (p. 38)].

'I do not exaggerate when I say that when listen to a long poem by Shawqi I feel as if I am truly listening to a symphony' His music wafts in my ears and I feel as if it is multiplying, as if groups of skilled musicians are participating in producing it in the rhythm of its notes. I have no doubt that this is due to his skillful control of the instruments of his words and their sound vibrations. The issue is not merely a matter of skill or ingenuity, but it is deeper than that. It is brilliance and inspiration, and a genius sense of the sound structure of poetry'.

This magnificence in music is coupled with a sweetness and freshness that is not known in our time to anyone other than Shawqi, and perhaps this was the greatest sign in his craft, for no matter how much you disagree in appreciating his poetry, when you hear it, you sharpen your ear to it, and you feel as if he is making holes in it of pure sound. The water roars between the rocks, and the sound rises sometimes, resembling the roar of the seas when they are agitated, and sometimes it falls, resembling the silver drops that fall from the oars of boats, as they swim on the surface of the Nile.

The music is often resonant, massive and sweet, as Shawqi always knew how to extract from the words of the language all that they possesses of resonance or bells, or in more precise terms, all its musical capabilities, and he was aided in that by a broad culture of the language.

Shawqi had a vast imagination and rich imagery, and his poetry, in this respect, is a museum of moving images and ghosts that approach you from every side. One imagines that he did not miss a glance or movement of a thing or an image without storing it in his memory and keeping it in his memory, only to retrieve it when needed in the form of a dazzling drawing or painting. Shawqi had a vast imagination and employed rich imagery. His poetry, in this respect, is a museum of moving images and ghosts that approach you from every side. A person may imagine that he never missed a gesture or movement of an object or an image without storing it in his memory and being aware of it on his clipboard, to draw upon it when he needed a brilliant drawing or painting [60 (p. 44)].

All those who knew Shawqi agree that he had an extraordinary intuition in the work and craft of poetry. He would not devote his attention to composing it until meanings came to him in torrents and words poured out upon him, as he was always present in mind, alert in spirit and open to the creation of art. This is explained by Dawoud Barakat, editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper in his time, who said, 'An incident would occur in the morning, and by evening it would be broadcast among the public as Shawqi's poem, because the incidents had a strong effect on him, shaking his nerves, arousing his soul, and stimulating his imagination. He composed poetry most of the time while walking, standing, or sitting with his friends, absent-minded. He rarely sat at his desk to think and strain his mind, but when he did, he would write down what he had composed and absorbed in his memory. Between one cigarette and another, he would find his idea, and between one word and another, he would find what matched the structure of the idea' [60 (p. 58)].

Dr Shawqi Daif presented a picture of the battle that Al-Aqqad led against Shawqi. It was clear that Dr Daif acknowledged Shawqi's genius and believed that Al-Aqqad had wronged him. Al-

Aqqad had accused Shawqi of being more interested in the word than in the meaning. As for Daif's opinion, he stated:

'It can be summed up that Al-Aqqad was dissecting and wounding Shawqi's poems and trying with all he could to prove that they were hollow drums, or rather rotten bones, with no poetry or emotion in them, but rather disintegration and infatuation with symptoms rather than substance or what could be called sorcery. All of this meant a severe revolt against Shawqi, a revolt that, for Al-Aqqad, turned into something resembling struggle and hostility' [60 (p. 105)]. Shawqi was gifted by the sweetness of the music of his poetry, along with its splendor and magnificence that made his great verses like eternal symphonies. The music of his poetry is the core of his creativity, and in it, he was always victorious over his opponents, who tried to turn people away from him. Yet instead, people turned away from the opponents and their criticism, and flocked to Shawqi's poetry. Shawqi's poetry still rings in the ears of the Arabs, and they are still attracted to it as if it were a poetic magnet [62 (p. 278)].

Shawqi's poetry was also distinguished by another artistic characteristic that distinguished him from his peers and made his poetry susceptible to composing and singing, which is, music, in which was perhaps his most wonderful artistic superiority. Once you listen to any of his poems, you know it is him, even if his name is not mentioned as long as your ear is accustomed to hearing his poetry. His melodies, which follow one sweet tone next to another, become firm in your soul. We do not exaggerate when we say that his poetry composes the most wonderful melodies known in our modern era, squeezed from the best words and styles, aided by a wonderful musical instinct that precisely measures the vibrations of the letters and the movements and the harmony of melody in words.

This musical quality in his poetry is supported by his skillful imagery, as he knew how to benefit from the treasures of ancient similes and metaphors. He was not satisfied with that, and added dreamy imagination. This is evident in many aspects of his poetry, especially when he resorts to description or to Pharaonic and historical matters [61 (p. 115)].

Fathi Ridwan (1911-1988)

Fathi Ridwan was the Minister of National Guidance during the era of Abdel Nasser. He wrote the following article, which was published in *Al-Ahram* on 22 January 1978.

Ridwan wrote that he still remember his thin hand, which looked like a child's hand. When I first met him, I was afraid to put pressure on it to shake hands, for fear that it would break. I had visited his house to obtain another poem from the Prince of Poets as encouragement and support of the same project that resulted in a factory of Egyptian subscriptions and contributions.

I met the greatest Arab poet in his elegant palace overlooking the Nile, which was surrounded by a garden arranged by the hand of an artist. I had anticipated this interview, as I had heard about the poet's impatience and his reluctance to talk to people and communicate with them. I had just entered the office in his palace, and presented to him in a short sentence the request for which I had come, when I immediately felt my fear dissipate. The man whose delicate eyes were nervously disturbed, who held the edge of his jacket with one trembling hand and fiddled with a cigarette with the other hand, who spoke in a low, gentle voice, did not alienate his guest,

and did not condescend to his interlocutor. He seemed deeply astonished when he heard the name of the project. His bewilderment increased when he learned that the whole matter of this project was the result of university students.

I saw him somewhat like a child who had heard something amusing or joyful. My visit did not last long, as I was careful not to burden him. I returned a second time to his house and had hardly crossed its threshold, when I saw the great poet, appearing from the corner of a path in the garden. He greeted me and shouted when I approached him, 'I read the prospectus'. I discovered that what he read in the magazine had created within him a greater interest in the project.

He started asking me about whom I had met, and whenever I mentioned his name, he commented with a short murmur, and promised me warmly that he would compose a poem for us, but the inspiration for poetry did not come quickly despite the strength of desire and good preparation. One afternoon, I saw a car heading towards the Nile. The moment I approached the iron door of the house, I went to *Al-Balagh* newspaper, which had allocated a special issue for us, decorated by quite a few writers and prominent people in society.

I saw the car of the Prince of Poets, in front of the door of the newspaper house, and when I entered the office of its owner, Abd Al-Qadir Hamza, I found Shawqi Bey delivering the poem. It was folded, so Abdel-Qader Hamza spread it out and began to chant it, in his usual calm, while the poet could hardly sit, stand, or leave, turning slightly, and his anxious, shining, precise eyes also turned in their sockets. When I looked at him, he pointed with his thin little hand to the poem, as if to say, 'I have fulfilled the promise'.

Collectors of Shawqi's poems mentioned it in his collection, in the fourth part, as his last poem [19 (pp. 233-235)].

Saleh Jawdat (1912-1976)

Saleh Jawdat was an Egyptian writer and jurist, who worked in the judiciary, and was passionate about Arabic literature.

One day his maternal grandmother, who was one of his freed maids, took him with her to the Khedive when he was three years old and his sight was weak. The Khedive asked for a pearl of gold and scattered it on the carpet at his feet. The child fell on the gold and looked at it, then gathered it and became distracted by it.

Yet, Shawqi lived flying in the sky with flaring, mercury eyes that could not stand still. Whenever Sheikh Ali Al-Laithi saw him, he used to say, 'Misk quarries installed on top of mercury' [48 (p.71)].

Poet Ahmad Rami, who was close to him, told me that Shawqi would attract his friends to his table because he would not return home after his morning walk unless he had one or more friends sharing his lunch with him. He frequented well-known bars in Cairo, the most famous of which were Solt, La Pro Menade and Dalbani. The latter was located at an outer corner of the current Semiramis Hotel building, and in front of it was a parking lot for carriages with horses.

Rami said, 'We used to sit at Dalbani's, and Shawqi would take a sip from his cup, then slip off quietly and ride a cart that would take him around the Zamalek Island. Then he would return and dictate several lines to me... and another sip... then another lap around the island... then several more lines... and the night would not end except with a poem that may exceed a hundred lines!'

Thus, poetry was easy to him, and its composition did not cost him the least bit of trouble, to the extent that the poem 'The Nile' one of his best poems, and perhaps even at the forefront of all Arabic poetry, was organised by the Prince of Poets in one night.

Aside from poetry, his hobby was the cinema, to the extent that he went there almost every night, and sat in the front row due to his poor eyesight. If the story was good, he enjoyed it, and if it was poor, he did not leave, but rather occupied himself with a new poem that he was composing, which he might complete before he left.

He had other hobbies, including owning pets and animals. He had dogs, cats, deer, turtles, monkeys, peacocks, parrots, and hundreds of colorful birds in his house. He even had a small crocodile for which he built a special tank in his house garden [48 (pp.73-74)]. His friend, the late poet, Shakib Arslan, named his collection *Al-Shawqiyat*. As for the one who bestowed on Shawqi the title of Prince of Poets, he was the late Dawoud Barakat, editor-in-chief of *Al-Ahram* newspaper.

That was in the year 1899, when Shawqi was about 30 years old, and his star shone at that time. Three factions conflicted with him at the time. Boutros Ghali wanted to lure him to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dawoud Barakat wanted to influence him to contribute to the editorial office of *Al-Ahram* newspaper, and the Khedive refused to let him leave the palace.

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

أأخون اسماعيل في أولاده ولقد ولدت بباب إسماعيل؟

Would I betray Ismail regarding his children,
While I was born at Ismail's door? [48 (pp. 75-76)].

There was an estrangement between Shawqi and Sa'ad Zaghloul at times, but the appreciation of the men for each other was not affected by this. Rather, each kept his feelings hidden in a latent affection for the other, preventing it to be shown due to the harshness of circumstances. Confirmation of this fact came on the day of Ali's wedding, Shawqi's son. He postponed Parliament for an entire hour to attend the ceremony, and this is something that is unparalleled in the history of parliaments. When he entered and sat with Shawqi, I took a picture of them together. Al-Judaili, who was Zaghloul's secretary at that time, said, 'This is a picture of the immortals'. Zaghloul smiled and pointed to Shawqi, saying, 'Here is eternity!' [48 (p. 78)].

SHAWQI'S DEATH AND FUNERAL

Shawqi remained the object of people's appreciation, admiration, and the voice of their condition until death came unexpectedly after he finished composing a long poem in which he

saluted the Qirsh (penny) Project, which was promoted by the youth of Egypt, and his noble soul passed away on 14 October 1932.

Two years before Shawqi's death, illnesses struck him, so he devoted himself to reading the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's hadith. He remained easy-going, cheerful, and light-hearted. In the last watch of the night of 14 October 1932, his soul responded to the call of his Lord.

Shawqi died in his palace known as Karmat Ibn Hani, located on the banks of the Nile in Giza.

In his last days, Shawqi was in good health and had no complaints other than a loss of appetite. He was examined by a well-known doctor who decided that his general health was fine, but his nutrition was weak, and he advised him to give the body the nourishment it needed. On Thursday, 13 October 1932, Shawqi felt healthy and energetic, which enabled him to eat lunch with a good appetite. Then he went for a drive in the car to the Heliopolis suburb and stopped by the house of his friend, Ismail Shirin, the director of publications, but he was not home, so he left his card. At around 9:00 p.m., he went to a restaurant in the capital and had dinner there. He then headed to Dar Al-Jihad, where he spent time near his friend, the bold writer, Professor Tawfiq Diab.

Shawqi arrived at his home in Giza at about 11:00 p.m. and went to bed, but he woke up at 2:00 a.m. The bell rang and the servant came. Shawqi asked for hot water and camphor leaves, and he instructed him to call two doctors, namely Dr Saka and Dr Jallad. Shawqi said to his servant, 'I feel that I am over, so convey my greetings to my friends who were visiting me here'.

Shawqi's family arrived while he was in a state of final exhaustion. When Dr Jallad arrived, this luminous lamp had already extinguished, the light of which radiated, filling the horizons with brightness, and covered the world with joy and happiness. Shawqi was gone after his name filled the mouth of the world, and his poetry was the literature of the Arab world and its pride for past and present generations.

Shawqi's death had barely been broadcast in Cairo when people became sad and startled, and everyone discussed their own history with him. If they had not been happy with Shawqi privately, they resorted to a general knowledge of his poetry and began to think about this great, luxurious inheritance that Shawqi had left for the Arab people, which will ascend the ranks of history.

The obituary of the deceased was broadcast in the capital's clubs and institutes by the Apollo Poetry Society, of which the deceased was president. His Majesty the King kindly showed his generous compassion to the deceased and his family, appointing a representative to act on his behalf to attend the funeral. The Prime Minister also delegated His Excellency the Minister of Education on his behalf and his fellow ministers to conduct the funeral.

It was announced that the start of the official funeral procession would be at 500 p.m. from Ismailia Square, and a large pavilion was erected for the mourners to sit in. It was almost 4:00 when large crowds of writers, poets, employees, students, notables, journalists and all classes related to literature rushed to the pavilion.

A few minutes later, the deceased's body was placed in a mortuary car, which carried him from his home in Giza to Ismailia Square. The procession proceeded through Suleiman Pasha Street and Qasr al-Nil Street, and masses of mourners filled the rivers and sidewalks of the streets in a very long line. Prayers were said over the body of the deceased at Al-Kakhia Mosque, and His Eminence Al-Taftazani led the worshipers. After praying over him, the two sons of the deceased, Ali and Hussein, and Hamid Al-Alayli, his son-in-law, accepted the condolences of the crowd of mourners. Then the coffin was transferred to a car, followed by many other cars to go to the family cemetery in Sayyeda Nafisa, where he lay in his final resting place next to his father-in-law, the late Hussein Shaheen Pasha [26 (pp. 307-310)].

The honorable wife was alarmed at the horror of the news, and rushed to the room of her husband whom she had never angered. She arrived at his bed as the dying poet took his last breath. She closed his eyes and mouth, and leaned his head towards the holy city of Makkah (the prayer Qiblah), that head which was filled with the miracle of immortal art. Shawqi had died.

The procession arrived opposite the Al-Kakhia Mosque near Opera Square, where the funeral prayer was performed. When the body was brought there, the university students surrounded the coffin and chanted, 'In God's protection, O Prince of Poets'. Many people had already reached the family cemetery. When the body arrived, the air was filled with exclamations, and a team of students and some athletes came forward and carried the coffin to the grave, while a pang of grief spread throughout the hearts of those attending, as if they had not known until this moment that Egypt had lost the prince of its eloquence and poetry. As soon as they witnessed the body being carried to its final resting place, the voices became louder, weeping and lamenting, interspersed with expressions imprisoned by sadness and driven by the heat of pain.

While the workers were bidding farewell to the deceased, and while the crowds of people were breathing in sorrow and pain, the voice of a writer rose up, his eyes brimming with tears, 'Where are you going, o father of poetry and wisdom?' These words stirred the soul of sorrow, and the pale evening was filled with groans and agony, until the people found themselves in a mourning in which the tragedy became grave and inconsolable, while the sun bid farewell.

The newspapers appeared dark and sad, editions continued in Egypt, in Lebanon, in Syria, in Jordan, in Sudan, in Iraq, in London and in Paris, mourning the Prince of Poets. They were filled with funeral photographs, and the poems of poets who lost their pioneer appeared throughout the Arab world, poets chanting his name, or chanting his immortal verses' [2, pp. 193-195].

Farewell Procession

The following is taken from a document at the Microfilm Center in Dar Al-Ahram in Cairo on the last farewell, the Qasr El-Nile Street parade.

In the midst of sorrow and tears, Egypt carried the Prince of Poets to the seat of eternity. It was not until five in the evening yesterday, 14 October 1932, that the spacious pavilion that was erected in one part of Ismailia Square in front of the Nile Palace was crowded with dignitaries, notables, literary figures, men of journalism, and students. Then the body of the deceased arrived in a car, and the procession was organised. It was led by school students in two rows on both sides of the road, with flags in the middle with signs of mourning drawn on them. The

students were followed by mounted police soldiers and their colleagues on foot. The coffin of the deceased was carried on the necks of the Apollo and New Literature Associations, as well as students from Egyptian and American universities.

Behind the coffin walked the honorable Mahmoud Al-Siyoufi, delegated by His Majesty the King. He was followed by the family of the deceased led by his honorable sons and son-in-law, the honorable Hamid Al-Alayli, His Excellency the Minister of Education and his deputy, and their Excellencies Hamad Al-Basel Pasha, agent of the Egyptian delegation, Mahmoud Sedqi Pasha, Governor of Cairo, Mustafa Fathi Pasha, and Mukhtar Hegazy Pasha. Salama Mikhail, a member of the Egyptian delegation, Abdel Khaleq Madkour Pasha, Ismail Sherin, Mr Muhammad Tawfiq Diab, Muhammad Shaier, Mr Abdul Qadir Hamza, Dr Taha Hussein, Mr Al-Taftazani, the families of the newspapers *Al-Jihad* and *Al-Balagh*, a gathering of journalists, poets, writers, and members of scientific societies and charitable board directors followed. Many university and high school professors, students, merchants, notables, and workers were also in the procession.

Then the procession arrived opposite the Al-Kakhia Mosque near Opera Square, and brought the body of the deceased into the mosque, where the funeral prayer was performed among the large gathering of worshipers, while the deceased's two sons and his son-in-law accepted the condolences of some of the mourners, thanking them for their expressions of sympathy. When the body was brought, carried on the shoulders of members of the Apollo Association and the New Literature Association, Egyptian university students and many young people surrounded the coffin and began chanting in loud voices mixed with pain, 'In the protection of God, O Prince of Poets', and the mourners repeated their chants for a long time. Some of them came forward to carry the body in its coffin and deposit it in a large car that had been prepared to carry it to the family cemetery in the Sayyida Nafisa neighbourhood, but the students refused to do so, saying, 'We are more deserving of exalting the Prince of Poets than anyone else'. Crowds of people thought that the funeral procession would continue on foot to the cemetery, so they stood on both sides of the streets leading to it. When the car passed, they echoed the sentiment, 'the poet of eternity'.

Likewise, many people had gone to the cemetery of the deceased's family to wait for his body, and when the car arrived, the air was filled with cheers for the memory of the Prince of Poets. A team of Egyptian University students and some athletes, led by the well-known hero Sayed Nusair, came forward and carried the coffin to the grave headquarters, causing a pang of sorrow in the hearts of those present [19 (pp. 148-149)].

'Shawqi had countless and limitless longings. He longed for the ancient civilisation of Egypt, the greatness of the Turks, the power of the caliphate, the ambition of the Arabs, the tolerance of Islam, and finally the glories of the East. He was our national poet, after Al-Mutanabi. With Shawqi's death, the tongue expressing this nationalism has died' [62].

The following are excerpts from *Ithna Ashar Aman fi Suhbat Amir al-Shu'ara*, (*Twelve years in the company of the Prince of Poets*) [58 (pp. 139-191)].

Sermons at Shawqi's Grave **From Dr Al-Anani:**

Shawqi died, and he was to humanity like Homer, Horace, Aristotle Thales and Descartes. Shawqi began a prosperous era in the history of Arabic literature. And with his end, on this day and in this harsh moment, another literary era has begun, celebrated with his pure spirit, poetic imagination, and wise inspiration, which literary history will narrate. We have received an immortal and precious heritage from the great Shawqi, preserved and developed by the Apollo Society and the Active Poetry Family as well as all the literary bodies in the Arab world and at its forefront, the New Literature Association and its branches in the East.

From Mr Al-Taftazani:

Muhammad Al-Taftazani stood up next and mourned the Prince of Poets delivering an impromptu sermon. He mentioned that he was of a past generation and that he was not only a poet, but rather a divine confirmation in his world, a genius and a spirit that gave meaning of life and immortality to all those who speak Arabic. He was the sum of the glory of the Arab nation, and indeed all Muslims.

He said that Shawqi was considered the Messenger of God, may God bless him and grant him peace, and his good and pure family, as his immortal poetry was not devoid of the scents of the Messenger of God and praised the memory of his descendants and family. In Nahj Al-Burdah, he shared with them their immortal affliction and depicted them in his overall feeling of their natural image, talking proudly of them and their generosity. He depicted the amount of their sacrifices for the sake of Islam and the Muslims. From this perspective, the people of the prophet's house throughout the world consider that they have been struck to the core by the loss of Shawqi, as he was the united individual struggling for them and holding on to the strongest support in their love.

Excerpts from Arab and Foreign Newspapers in Memorial of Shawqi 145-147

From the editorial on Jihad written by Muhammad Tawfiq Diab:

At four o'clock yesterday morning (Friday, 14 October 1932), God took the soul of the Prince of Poets. And at this hour, that genius spirit that has danced in the hearts of the Arab nations for two generations has returned to its creator with art of poetry or bursts of magic, the likes of which few have been bestowed in the eras.

Shawqi died, let the young and the old men, the young ladies and women in Egypt and its Arab countries mourn him. His poetry was brilliant pieces of music inspired by genius that the sons and daughters of this dear language sing at all times and in every place.

Shawqi departed, and with his departure ended the reign of the great poets who revived in our modern era the glory of the ancients. The one who bequeathed Arabic glory to the glory of its predecessors died, and added to it an immortal abundance. This is his magnificent collection in two volumes that fill souls with pride and hearts with joy, as they contain the masterpieces of immortal speech, the sundries of wonderful meanings, and the artifacts of a style that is impossible except for the princes of printed wording. These are his last theatrical novels, some of which are sufficient clear proof of his remaining greatness on the face of time.

The Prince of Poets has died, and this is undisputed. Shawqi has died. Let the Egyptians, the Arabs in every Arab country or inhabited by an Arab, and the Muslims all over the globe mourn

him. Shawqi was the poet of Arabic and the poet of Islam, and he was the most valuable pearl in the crown of literature. This pearl was snatched at four o'clock this morning!

To the world of eternity, O Prince of the rhetoric, may the burning lives, the flowing tears, and the hearts beat in gratitude for your gifts for the people of Arabic over the course of two generations of time. We cannot give you what you are worthy of, O dear departed, O great and immortal, of thanks, praise and gratitude.

May God's mercy be on you, on Shawqi, and His good blessings and sanctifications.

148-149

From *Al-Balagh* by His Excellency Abdul Qadir Hamza:

Shawqi was not just a poet, but he was a glory to Egypt throughout his entire era. His era extends from the last days of Ismail Pasha until today. It spreads its wings over a full half-century in which poetry and literature changed through phases, whether in softness or violence. Shawqi did not let any of them pass without fulfillment and he was first in all of them. Even when his leadership in poetry was recognised, it was not a rank to which he was raised, but rather it was a testimony to the rank he had attained. This leadership did not stop at the borders of Egypt, but rather it extended beyond them to every country, so his leadership became the leadership of Egypt and his glory became the glory of Egypt. When we search the entire history of Arabic literature, we find only a rare few literary leaderships for our country, while Shawqi's may be the most unanimous and most prominent of them all.

This body that the coffin carries today is the body of a man whose literary glory over 50 years was the glory of his country and the glory of his language. This glory will remain, and the days will only increase it in height. Its metal will only increase in brightness as long as poetry and literature remain. Future generations will study his dramatic novels as Europeans now study the novels of Shakespeare, Racine and Corneille. We will go, and all the people of wealth and prestige will go, and all the days will pass by, while Shawqi will remain a symbol by which the era in which he lived will be remembered.

May Shawqi sleep peacefully in his grave, for he fulfilled his duty and passed through this world like no leader or conqueror ever passed. This tear for him is a tear of grief for his separation, and sorrow for his country's bereavement. May God have mercy on him, make him dwell in Paradise, and ease our affliction.

150-151

From *Al-Muqattam*:

The decree of God was fulfilled and carried out. It was His fated destiny, and there is no one who can oppose His decree. A tragedy came down on the Arabic language. A disaster befell literature and poetry. Mourners lament the prince of Egyptian poets and the imam of the composers of this era.

Shawqi died and the fluttering flag of the emirate of poetry was folded, its lofty mountain demolished, its solid foundation undermined, its bright lamp extinguished, and its shining planet fallen. The electric cables carry his obituary to lands near and far, filling the forums of literature with disturbance, panic and anxiety.

151-152**From *Al-Ahram* on 15 October 1932:**

It has been said, 'The orator becomes an orator, but the poet is born a poet'. Shawqi was born a poet and remained a poet from his cradle to his grave.

He was a poet when his grandmother took him with her to Khedive Ismail when Shawqi was three years old, and his sight would not descend from the sky due to a nervous disorder. So the Khedive asked for a sack of gold, then scattered it on the rug at his feet over Shawqi - as it was narrated in the introduction to his collection - busying him with collecting it and playing with it. The Khedive said to his grandmother, 'Do something like this with him, for he will soon get used to looking at the ground'. She said, 'This is a medicine that only comes out of your pharmacy, my lord'. He responded, 'Bring him to me whenever you want, for I am the last one to scatter gold in Egypt'.

Shawqi was a poet while he was a student, and his talent began to inspire him with beautiful images and balanced, musical speech. Shawqi was a poet when he sought law and literature in France. During that era, he composed poems that heralded the imamate and emirate that he would become in the poetry state. He was a poet when he represented the Egyptian government at the Geneva Conference and when he composed a poem that included the major incidents that occurred in the Nile Valley since the dawn of history.

Shawqi remained a poet in his death. On the night before his death, a famous singer was singing one of his poems, and the audience was clapping in delight at the beauty of the poetry. A few hours after his death, the last poem he composed was recited at a party for the youth in charge of the Penny Project.

He was, may God have mercy on him, despite the generous living, great titles, wide prestige, and widespread fame, gentle in spirit, humble and mild-mannered. He had a chaste tongue and a pen that did not speak in jest and did not write satire.

155**From *Al-Sha'ab* Newspaper:**

Shawqi was extremely great in his poetry, and in his literature, reaching the pinnacle of greatness, and he was unique in his generation. His loss is a calamity.

156**From *Al-Masaa'* Newspaper:**

Suddenly, Shawqi moved away from a nation who appreciated him and exalted his genius and magnificence. The people of the country felt the impact of this disaster, so they went out to the streets, swept away to get one last look of his body wrapped in the sheets of genius, while there is no compensation.

How can Shawqi not be a generation on his own? He left behind a book in which future generations will read the verses of great patriotism and the notes of eternal poetry that remained from the first predecessors whom Shawqi joined in the garments of majesty and immortality to sit with them on the couches of glory that remain in the paradise of eternity.

From *Al-Alam* Newspaper:

If there was nothing in Shawqi's book other than his saying, it would have been enough for him:

وإنما الأمم الأخلاق ما بقيت فإن همو ذهبت أخلاقهم ذهبوا

'But nations are morals as long as they remain,
if their morals are gone, they are gone'.

From *Al-Ettihad* Newspaper:

Shawqi died, and the harp that filled the world with melody and music broke, and drowned out the sound of the nightingale that had always chirped in the gardens and at the rising of the moon. With its departure the joy of life, its delight, its splendor and its beauty, was gone, because Shawqi was in Egypt like a perfumed breeze that passed through its atmosphere. We lost it when we needed it the most, while it was like a smile whose lips released.

157

From *Journal de Care* 'The Prince of Poets Has Died':

This man grew up as a poet and composed poetry from an early age, and his eloquence was abundant in interesting poems, which earned him the nickname Lamartine of Egypt. He was not just like Lamartine, a poet with gentle sentiment and sweet style, but he proved over time that he could equal Victor Hugo and reach the pinnacle of lyrical poetry with his good formulation, his strength of expression, structures, and superior ability to compose.

Shawqi was influenced by these two French poets, but, nevertheless, he retained his deeply Arab character. He was the first major Arab poet to write theatrical novels that were performed in most theatres in Egypt and the Arab East.

Eastern and Western Telegrams and Condolences from Dignitaries and Institutions

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London, October 15 to Al-Ahram's special correspondent: *The Times* newspaper today mourned Ahmad Shawqi Bey. The deceased joined the Arab National Movement and was also famous for his support of the Islamic University. He composed poems that stoked the fire of patriotic enthusiasm in the hearts of Egyptians. When World War was declared, he was among those who were asked to leave the country. He is credited before anyone else with building the Theatre of Modern Arabic Literature.

159

London, October 15 to *Al-Balagh's* private correspondent: This morning, the English newspapers mourned the late Ahmad Shawqi Bey, the Prince of Poets. *The News Chronicle* quoted a telegraph from Reuters describing him by saying that he was to Egypt like Tennyson (the Poet Laureate during Queen Victoria's reign). He composed poems according to the orders of the head of state for government-related occasions.

Beirut on October 15 to *Al-Balagh's* private correspondent: Yesterday and today, the Lebanese newspapers mourned the Prince of Poets, Ahmad Shawqi Bey, by publishing his picture and expressing condolences to Egypt and the Arab nation for his loss. Many telegrams were sent to

Egypt and the newspapers enumerated Shawqi's stance in Lebanon, his wonderful poems there, and the literary gatherings that he used to hold in the summer in this country.

Damascus on October 15 to *Al-Balagh's* special correspondent: The news of the death of the Prince of Poets had a ring of sadness in Damascus especially as a result of the party recently held by the Arab Scientific Academy to memorialise the late Hafeth Ibrahim. Damascene newspapers were published today containing a biography of the deceased and praising his gratitude to Syria, and in particular to Damascus, which he loved and praised its history.

160

Haifa on October 15 to *Al-Balagh's* private correspondent: People were shocked yesterday when the news of the death of the Prince of Poets spread throughout the country. The public hesitated to believe it, and many people rushed to address their friends in Egypt by telephone. *Palestine Today's* newspapers were published, in particular the newspaper *Palestine* in Jaffa, which confirmed the news and details of the funeral, and telegrams were sent. Condolences to Egypt.

161

The Muqattam Damascene correspondent noted the article by Mr. Shafiq Jabri Bey, the glorious poet, that he published in the Damascene newspaper *Al-Ayyam*. We decided to publish this article, which is entitled 'Ahmad Shawqi - a poet whose like has not appeared in a thousand years' The following is its text:

When we started writing this article and gathering our minds to depict what happened to the genius of poetry with the death of Ahmad Shawqi, we became confused, and we did not know what to say, as talk about Shawqi crowds the chest of every person who tastes the eloquence of poetry and knows his place in their hearts.

This fertile soul has passed, which took poetry back to the days of Abu al-Tayyib Al-Mutanabbi, in an era in which the connection with the old was almost lost, but it did not pass until it brought inspiration to the Arabs, alerted their feelings, sieved their tastes, shared with them every joy and sorrow. He loved them and they loved him, and he glorified them and they glorified him.

All Syrian newspapers devoted a large portion of their pages to the late poet and literary figure, Ahmad Shawqi. The Beirut newspaper *Al-Nidaa* published a full page and some of another page, and published a large picture of the deceased in the middle of its front page.

Fata Al-Arab newspaper published a lot about his last hour, highlighted his talents, and recorded the verses of his rhetoric.

Al-Nidaa newspaper reported that Shawqi's poetry was distinguished by its oriental spirit, the Arabic preamble. His oriental spirit flowed through his poems like water into the stem, bestowing on it its freshness and life that noble souls desire, especially because he freed it from racism and sectarianism. Moses and Jesus are often mentioned in his poems, alongside the mention of the Arab Prophet Muhammad.

163

An article in the Beirut newspaper (*Lisan al-Hal*) stated:

'Shawqi is none other than the singing nightingale, who has a wonderful musical style, a vast imagination, precise feelings, and light meanings. His poetry was endowed with a tone and charm that made him the prince of poetry in all Arab countries'.

Shawqi has many poems in which he chanted about Lebanon and Syria, and he composed most of them while he was summering in Lebanon, a place that loved and honored him. We cannot show Shawqi's characteristics and poetic talents, as that requires a careful study, not a hasty word like this.

May God have mercy on Shawqi and console the Arab countries in general and Egypt in particular regarding this great tragedy, and may God give birth to a successor to Arab literature that continues to strengthen its status'.

164

Al-Bairaq newspaper was published on the 19th of October, and on its front page was a picture of the deceased next to the late Sa'ad Zaghloul Pasha. In its aforementioned issue, it quoted some of what the Egyptian-Lebanese newspapers wrote about the Prince of Poets.

The owner of the Lebanese newspaper (*Al-Wadi*), published in Zahle, had strong friendship ties with the deceased. He and Shawqi often sat in the management office of *Al-Wadi* during his stays in Zahle.

He said:

'In front of the statues of Phidias and Mblo, and at the thresholds of Al-Ahram and Ba'albek, I see the symbol of the poet Ahmad Shawq'.

The Lebanese newspaper (*Al-Asifa*) in Beirut said after it published a full-page photo of the Prince of Poets: 'Shawqi died confessing to the Angel of Death that he had been victorious, despite the fact that he took revenge on death with the remaining masterpieces that are an adornment in the goodness of time and eternity.

Shawqi is the leader of an entire generation in Arabic literature. He is the leader of an era that will bear his name in our literary history'.

169

'Today died, the one whom poet Al-Akhtal wished to "be a feather in his wing"'.

170

In Iraq, newspapers devoted columns to praise the exploits of the great deceased, and Mr. Al-Jubouri wrote:

لئن قد أبكت الأرزاء ناساً فهذا الرزء قد أبكى الجمادا

If tragedies make people cry, then this tragedy makes inanimate objects cry.

171

In Sudan, the newspaper *Hadarat Al-Sudan* published:

The telegram shook us with Shawqi's obituary, and I did not think there was a person speaking Arabic not shaken under the current of this news, the horror of which makes hearts flow and breaks lives.

Shawqi died, and with his death, died the shame of the enviers.

Thus, you lived your life with an honest soul, a pure heart, and a clean tongue, to the mercy, satisfaction, and bliss of God, the All-Merciful.

173

Condolences of the Syrian Arab Scientific Academy

Excerpt from the editorial, November 1, 1932

Shawqi by Mustafa Sadiq Al-Rafi'i

This is the man whom it seems to me that Egypt chose above all of its people to place in him its speaking spirit. It obligated for him what it did not obligate for anyone else, helped him with what was not agreed upon for anyone else, and endowed him with power and empowerment and the means and characteristics of leadership according to the level of a nation that wants to be a poetic nation. Not through him alone, Egypt was able to say to history: This is my poetry and my literature!

Shawqi, this is the name that was in literature like the sun from the East.

The meaning of his name expanded and referred to all of Egypt, as if it was said the Nile, the Pyramid, or Cairo.

174

The evidence of genius is that it contains the moving secret that does not stop, does not tire, or interrupts its work system, as if it contains the senses of a bee in a garden. His poetry grows as time grows longer, and he does not lag behind his time and does not fall short of his furthest goals. It is as if he were with time in a single context, as if his poetry was a history of speech whose stages of growth were evolving. He did not freeze nor regress, and its owner's imagination remained until the end of his life in the plan of the sky, like a large cloud. Lightning full and rainy, pouring out on one side and filling up the other.

From the editorial in *Al-Hilal*, November 1932

This poet, despite his high standards, used to hide from people's eyes with meekness and modesty. This is a rare phenomenon and we do not know of anything similar to it among the poets. If Shawqi composed a poem to be recited at a public party, he would send his poem to one of his friends to recite it in his place. He rarely attended its recitation because he hated people bothering him by praising him.

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People rarely agree to pledge allegiance to anyone in the principedom of poetry as was their consensus to pledge allegiance to Shawqi in that principedom, not only in Egypt, but in all countries whose people speak the Arabic language. In fact, Shawqi is one of the few poets time rarely grants. What increases the power of his poetry is that it appeared in an era that leaned

towards materialism and that was devoid of imagination. His poetry was an inspiration, which you could not hear or read without feeling a mysterious pleasure, because it reached the depths of the soul through the heart and emotions.

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From the editorial in *Kul Shay*, 22 October 1932:

"Shawqi was not only the poet and the Prince of Poets in Egypt, he was the owner of that principedom in all countries whose people speak Arabic. You could not imagine a pupil in an elementary school or a student in a university in Egypt or in other Arab countries who had not memorised Shawqi verses that follow the path of proverbs.

This poet grew up in the embrace of glory and was connected from an early age to the royal family. Therefore, his poetry was refined, far from the harshness of Bedouinism, and from singing about the sword and spear that ancient Arab poets sang about. The effects of the environment in which he grew up were clearly evident in everything he wrote and composed. Despite his high status in poetry, he was very humble and would only address you with gentleness and respect. Indeed, if his name were mentioned, modesty would rise in his face.

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Jaffa on October 17 to *Al-Ahram's* special correspondent: The Arab Girls Association in Nablus decided to hold a major memorial service for the late Ahmad Shawqi, Prince of Poets, on the fortieth day of his death.

London on October 20 to *Al-Ahram's* special correspondent: Today, the *Thames* newspaper published a letter by Professor George Qatawi in which he gave a summary of the life of Ahmed Shawqi Bey and his greatest works. It concluded as follows:

'The death of Ahmed Shawqi Bey is a terrible loss for Egyptian literature. The deceased is considered the most brilliant of the masters of the literary era. The strings of the Arab guitar had been faint or silent for a long time'.

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A cable of condolence from His Excellency the President of the Syrian Republic stated:

I am very sorry for the obituary of your comrade, the Prince of Poets, and I share with you this tragedy that has afflicted the peoples of all Arab countries,
Muhammad Ali Al-Abed

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The Prime Minister of Iraq wrote:

'I have heard of the great tragedy that befell the Arab nation with the death of the prince of its rhetoric. Please accept my heartfelt condolences.
Nouri Al-Saeed

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The Supreme Islamic Council in Palestine wrote:

The great and painful loss that befell the Arabic language with its great genius and inimitable genius, the late Prince of Poets, had a tone of sorrow and sadness that spread throughout the

Islamic and Arab countries. The affliction is great and the grief is excessive. We ask God to bestow condolences, inspire patience, and shower the deceased with mercy. We belong to God and to Him we shall return.

President of the Supreme Islamic Council, Amin Al-Husseini

88-1911

Near East magazine published the following:

Ahmad Shawqi Bey, born in 1868, died at his home in Cairo on October 13. He was known as the most poetic of the Arabic poets of the modern era, and some of his admirers went so far as to say that he was a peer of the greatest poets of the ancient era.

Perhaps one of the amazing coincidences of fate is that he was sent to Montpellier, because it is the last city in which medieval Arab culture lived in the south of France, and also because at the time when Shawqi was a student there, another young man of his age, Paul Fleury, was a poet at the university. France was the first in the modern era, and it is a coincidence that the two poets shared some of their characteristics.

Shawqi was immensely loved and famous not only in Egypt and Syria but also throughout the Arab world. He was at the forefront of modern Egyptian writers who made it their effort to inspire their nation to love its historical and literary past. With this motivation, he wrote poetry, stories about Tutankhamun and Cleopatra, the latter a poetic novel that was performed many times last winter in Cairo. He also wrote two excellent poems about the Sphinx and the Nile, which have been translated into French.

In the midst of deep sadness and comprehensive astonishment that took over my entire soul and all of my senses, duty called me, and I woke up to its voice, which overcame sadness and astonishment when it called upon me, saying:

The whole East is looking forward to news of your master. Your sadness for him is only equaled by your loyalty. It is not loyalty that deep sadness makes you forget your highest and sacred duty. Do not hesitate to reveal your memories of this late literary leader to quench thirsty souls thirsty for such memories’.

Ahmad Abdul-Wahab Abu Al-Izz stated on 21 November 1932 [58 (pp. 139-191)]:

Shawqi asked that these two verses from his poem ‘Nahj al-Burda’ be written on his grave:

يا أحمدَ الخير، لي جاءَ بِسَمِيَّتِي *** وكيف لا يتسامى بالرسولِ سَمِي
إنْ جَلَّ ذَنْبِي عن الغُفْرانِ لي أَمَلٌ *** في الله يجعلني في خيرٍ مُعْتَصِم

O benevolent Ahmad (Muhammad), I was honored to be named after you,
and how can someone not be honored by being named after the Messenger?

If my sins are too great to be forgiven,
I have hope in God that keeps me in the best of preservation.

CONCLUSION

We conclude with the words of Ahmed Hassan Al-Zayat:

Shawqi was fair compensation for the ten centuries that passed in the history of the Arabs, in which no talented poet appeared to connect what had been cut off from the inspiration of poetry. He renewed what had been obliterated in the approach to literature and reserved in the Arabic rhetoric its well-known share of the inspired expression of the word of God spread throughout the universe, the secrets of beauty hidden in nature, and the mysterious meanings of goodness in life. His loss was a loss of the artistic conscience of the people who taught him how to appreciate literature, relish poetry, and pour out dry emotions with his abundance of this brilliant and rich talent. Years follow years, and memory succeeds memory, and grief continues to torment due to the impossibility of patience and the lack of compensation for it. Shawqi will remain as destiny placed him; the universe will continue to revolve, criticism will be unjust, taste will develop and rise and Shawqi's poetry will remain steadfast as long as the truth is steadfast, immortal as long as God has destined it, and readable as long as the Arabs remain [39].

There is not enough space to get acquainted with Shawqi's poetry in all its aspects. Rather, we say that the judgment on Shawqi's status is now in the hands of history. Shawqi's contemporaries differed in assigning that status, although most of them agreed that he is the Prince of Poets in the true description, on the condition that Shawqi, like other poets, had critics who tried in many cases to lower him from the rank he reached and to raise others above him, but we believe that Shawqi's poetry, like a firm foundation, will immortalise as long as Arabic literature immortalises [63 (p. 24)].

Shawqi's enviers thought that if he were removed from their path, their progress would appear. To the contrary, when he was removed from their path, their backwardness appeared, and this alone is one of Shawqi's miracles, may God have mercy on him [55 (p. 301)].

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