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HISTORIOGRAPHY IN EGYPT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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This chapter reviews the development of Egyptian historiography in the twentieth century, and looks at the factors which affected its formation and established its basic foundations. The achievements of the founding fathers are discussed and evaluated together with the contribution of the students who were trained by them. The outstanding achievements of intellectuals who were not educated or trained as professional historians are also appraised. The chapter tries to show the diversity of historical writing, styles and methods used by the Egyptian historians. Finally, the discussion reviews current problems that may hinder the further development of the discipline.

Factors behind the Formation of the Discipline

There are certain decisive factors that affected the emergence and development of Egypt historiography in the twentieth century. The discipline's roots are in the achievements of Egyptian intellectuals in the nineteenth century. The making of Cairo University in the early twentieth century laid the basis for academic professionalism. Other factors directly or indirectly affected the formation of Egyptian historians. Among these were issues related to political developments and the State's interest in moulding historians' work in accordance with ideological dictates.

a) The Heritage of the Nineteenth Century. Egyptian historiography is deeply rooted in the culture and intellectual revival movement of the nineteenth century which made some major works of medieval Muslim historians available in published form,

translations of European books, mainly from the French, and a number of periodicals issued by scientific societies and educational institutions. These developments contributed to the growth of historical writings which were influenced by the political developments and the rise of a nationalist movement in response to foreign intervention and British occupation. The historical writings of Egyptian intellectuals in the nineteenth century included works on the history of the world, histories of adjacent countries, the general history of Egypt, Egypt under Muhammad Ali's dynasty, biographies, autobiographies, and personal memories.¹

Both in method and in style, the writings of the Egyptian historians of the nineteenth century differed greatly from those of their predecessors in the medieval Islamic period. Influenced by European historians, they abandoned the annalistic method. They tried to criticize, analyse, compare, and arrive at analytical judgments. Their sources varied widely, ranging from government documents to archaeological artefacts. They blended the material taken from the primary sources written by Muslim medieval historians with materials from the works of European historians and orientalists. They realized the necessity of rewriting the history of Egypt in light of the latest findings of historical and archaeological research.

The Egyptian historians of the nineteenth century wrote on all branches of history. Besides political histories of Egypt and the world, they produced works on fiscal regulations of the land, various systems of education, problems of Egyptian society and the nationalist movement. They also tackled such subjects as Muslim political institutions, slavery in Islam and the history of Islamic civilizations. Some of them published in historical journals in Egypt and Europe and gained international recognition.

Although historical writing in the nineteenth century were not produced by professional historians, they generated interest in history, bridged the gap between medieval Muslim historians and modern

¹For details see: Gamal el-Din al-Shayyal, "Historiography in Egypt in the Nineteenth Century" in Lewis & Holt (eds.), *Historians of the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964) PP. 403-21.

European methods and laid the foundations of modern historiography in Egypt.

b) The Making of Cairo University. As early as the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Egyptian socio-political elite realized that founding a university was necessary for Egypt's cultural development. They overcame all kinds of political difficulties created by the British occupation authorities. The Egyptian University was established in December 1908 as a private institution. Having limited facilities and financial resources, the university concentrated in technical liberal arts. Instruction was done by part-time Egyptian teachers and several full-time Italian, French and British faculty. The Ministry of Education's reluctance to accredit degrees offered by the university affected enrolment. The outbreak of World War I caused a serious financial crisis which made the university unable to survive without government support.

By 1917, the British had reconsidered their policies and come out in favor of a state university, hoping they could shape it to serve their own interests. The Ministry of Education appointed a commission in 1917 to plan a state university. The final report in favour came out in 1921, but the founding decree of the state university was issued until 1925 due to political difficulties. The private university was incorporated into the new institution as the Faculty of Arts.

The History Department was one of five major departments comprising the Faculty of Arts. Others were the departments of Arabic and Oriental Languages, European Languages, Geography, and Philosophy. French and British faculty were hired to teach history. French, English and Arabic were the languages of instruction up to the end of the 1930s. At the time, Egyptians who had been sent to Europe to specialize in history took over. This marked the start of the Egyptianization of the faculty and Arabization of the curriculum.

The achievements of the first Egyptian faculty of the History Department provided the hard core of Egyptian historiography in the twentieth century. These faculty members had earned degrees in history from English universities, and been trained in modern methodology. However, their basic education had been acquired in

Egypt. All graduated from the Higher School of Teachers (Madrasat al-Mu'allimin al-'Ulya) and were familiar with the works of nineteenth century Egyptian and European historians. They had been first sent to the University of Liverpool to obtain B.A.'s in history and were later sent to Liverpool or London universities for graduate studies. After receiving M.A. and Ph.D. degrees, they joined the faculty of Cairo University.

The curriculum of the private university (1908-1925) included three history courses: History of Ancient Civilization of Egypt and the Near East, History of Islam and Muslim Civilization, and Arab Historiography. It reflected an Arab-Muslim orientation. Two students were sent by the private university to study history in France. Sayyid Kamil, a member of the first mission of 1909, earned his Decorate from the Sorbonne (1913). Taha Husayn was sent in 1915 for a Decorate in history. While nothing is known about Kamil's subsequent career except his thesis, which was published in French as *La Conférence de Constantinople et la Question Egyptienne en 1882*, Taha Husayn became a tenured member of the faculty.²

After the foundation of the State University in 1925, Abdel-Hamid al-'Abbadi, was the first Egyptian faculty member in the History Department. He occupied the chair of Islamic history in Cairo University until 1942 when he became the first dean of the Faculty of Arts at Alexandria University. By the end of the 1920s four other Egyptians, who had been trained in Liverpool and London universities, joined the faculty of History Department. They shared with al-'Abbadi the burden of promoting the Egyptianization and Arabization of both faculty and curriculum.

Until the 1930s, most courses were on the history of Europe. This reflected the interest of the European faculty. Except for a course on the history of Islam, courses in Egypt and the Near East focused on East/West relations. National history was neglected until Muhammad Shafik Ghorbal was appointed associate professor in 1929. But the history of Europe continued to occupy one third of the department's

²For details on Cairo University see: Donald Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge University Press, 1990); Raouf Abbas Hamed, *Jami'at al-Qahira, Madiha wa Hadiruha* (Cairo University, Past and Present) (Cairo: Cairo University Press, 1987).

offerings. The rest was divided between history of Islam and history of Egypt. No courses on other areas were offered. It was also the task of founding fathers to compile text books in Arabic or to translate suitable ones from English.

c) The Impact of Political Developments. The first decade of the twentieth century in Egypt witnessed the rise of the nationalist movement, the formation of political parties, and the rise of new intellectual trends. In 1914 Egypt became a British Protectorate. All economic resources were mobilized to meet the demands of the British war effort, causing a serious social and economic crisis. By the end of World War I, the Egyptian socio-political elite tried to seize the opportunity to gain national independence. Britain's negative response led to the 1919 revolution which enhanced nationalist aspirations. Egypt was declared a sovereign state in 1922, but the British safeguarded their interests and maintained political control over what was in fact the semi-independent Kingdom of Egypt.³

The abolition of the Caliphate in Turkey in 1924 raised the issue of restoration of the prestigious religious office. King Ahmed Fuad of Egypt could not resist the temptation and wanted to be a Caliph. Other Muslim sovereigns shared the same desire. A furious debate on the issue occupied the political arena, paving the way for the rise of Muslim oriented political movements. The writings of Egyptian intellectuals in the inter-war period mirrored this crisis of orientation and the dichotomy between advocates of Egyptian nationalism and supporters of Pan-Islamism.

A host of major political developments affected Egypt in the next decades. The 1936 Anglo-Egyptian Treaty proved that Egypt still needed to settle the question of independence; economic problems in the 1940s enhanced mass movements and stimulated political ideas for social reforms, World War II was a major event in the country's life; and the traumatic 1948 Palestine War and Israel's emergence on the Middle East scene set the stage for a national turning point. The

³On political development of Egypt since World War I, see: Afaf L. S. Marsot, *Egypt's Liberal Experiment: 1922-36* (Berkeley, 1977); Jean and Simone Lacouture, *Egypt in Transition*, trans. Francis Scarfe (London, 1958); Mahmud Y. Zayid, *Egypt's Struggle for Independence* (Beirut, 1965); P. J. Vatikiotis, *Nasser and his Generation* (New York, 1978).

state was ready for a major political change and the coup d'état of July 23, 1952 ushered it in.

Elimination of the ancient regime by the Free Officers, introduction of land reform, and subsequent developments made it essential to reappraise the history of the monarchy and the liberal constitutional regime.

The Suez War of 1956 was another turning point in Egypt's political orientation. The Nasserist regime's support of Arab nationalist identity and made Arab nationalism a major orientation of the state. This was enhanced by the revolution of Yemen and the government's commitment to the Palestinian question.

These political developments placed a heavy burden on the shoulders of Egyptian historians. Most work on modern and contemporary Egypt as well as works on ancient and medieval history were influenced by contemporary political context.

d) The State's Interest in History. Within the context of King Ahmed Fuad's quest for the Caliphate was initiated a plan to rewrite the history of the dynasty. The King believed that history could be used to create a bright image before the international community that might help win him the Caliphate. Three French historians: Doin, Charles Roux, and Hanoteau, the British historian Dodwell, the Italian Sammarco, and the American Crabites were recruited by the King to write books on the dynasty of Muhammad 'Ali. These were published in French, Italian and English. Other works compiled by Syrian writers were published in Arabic to address Arab audience.

Collections of the nineteenth century state records and documents were moved from Dar al-Mahfuzat al- 'Umumiyya (State Public Archives) to the new royal archives of 'Abdin. A team of experts was recruited to classify them and translate Turkish documents. Missions were sent to the European historical archives to copy documents related to Egypt. Deny, the French orientalist and Sammarco were in charge of classification. Regardless of King Fuad's political motives, the foundation of the Royal Historical Archives was a significant

achievement. It was supplemented by the foundation of the Royal Egyptian Historical Studies Society in 1945 by King Farouk.⁴

Under the Nasserist regime, new approaches to history were adopted. These demanded the monarchy and the achievements of Muhammad 'Ali's dynasty and glorified the nationalist movements, but looked down on al-Wafd and other liberal political parties. The adoption of Arab nationalism and the introduction of an Arab approach to socialism in 1961 suggested a new mission for historians. In the Charter introduced by Nasser to the nationalist Congress in May 22, 1962, this mission was specified. Nasser declared that the "time has come to re-write the history of Egypt properly and perfectly in order to purify it from claims of false heroism and focus on the people's role in history."⁵

The media highlighted this demand for new historical writings. New core courses were introduced to the universities by the Supreme Council of Universities, a body created to control rather than coordinate academic efforts. The new courses included: Arab Socialism, the July Revolution, Arab Society, the Palestinian Question, and Arab Nationalism. Textbooks on these courses were needed and some historians rallied to meet the demand.

Regardless of the weakness of these text books, the state's growing interest in history encouraged a new generation of historians to tackle social history and to apply historical materialism and social interpretation. Studies of the contemporary history of Egypt and other Arab countries were also encouraged.

Making History a Craft

The foundation of national university in 1925 marked the beginning of academic professionalism in the discipline of the history. The founding fathers of this movement had achieved much: the Arabization and Egyptianization of curricula, publication of text books, and translation of European works. They also initiated graduate studies in history. The efforts of the Egyptian faculty who

⁴On the policies of Fouad, see: Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah, *Fuad King of Egypt* (London, 1936).

⁵Robert Stephenes, *Nasser: A Political Biography* (London, 1971) PP. 344-55; Gamal Abdul-Nasser, *Speeches and Interviews*.

joined the department of history in the late 1920s were supplemented by those of their colleagues who joined the faculty in the late 1930s. The latter were the first graduates of the history department who were sent to Liverpool and London to earn Ph.D.'s.

The significant achievement of these founding fathers was graduate studies. The hard task of training students in various fields of the discipline made available a number of cadres for history departments in Cairo University and two other universities founded later. Most of the faculty of history in Farouk University (Alexandria University) earned graduate degrees at Cairo University. The department of history at Ibrahim University ('Ain Shams University) came from Cairo University. The first deans of the faculties of Arts in Alexandria and 'Ain Shams universities were professors of history in Cairo university: Abdel-hamid al-'Abadi in Alexandria and Ibrahim Nushi in 'Ain Shams.

The achievements of the founding fathers in graduate studies forged the hard core of history as a craft in Egypt that covered the ancient, medieval and modern periods.⁶

a) Ancient History. In the field of ancient history, there is a division of labour between archaeologist and historians; history of the Pharaonic period was tackled by Egyptologist, while the Hellenistic period was attended by historians. Hence, graduate studies in Egyptology were handled by the department of Archaeology while graduate studies of the Hellenistic period were offered by the department of history. This does not mean that Egyptologist did not make contributions to historiography--most of the valuable works published in Arabic on the Pharaonic period are done by Ahmed Badawi, Ahmed Fakhri, Abdel-Mun'im Abu-Bakr, Salim Hassan, Abdel-'Aziz Salih and Nagib Mikhael—but their achievements in graduate studies were in Archaeology.

⁶Al-Majala al-Tarikhiyya al-Misriyya (The Egyptian historical review) journal of the Egyptian Historical Studies Society published a bibliography of M. A. and Ph. D. theses in history from the beginning of graduate studies at Cairo University to the mid 1970s, all information appearing here is based on this bibliography; see: Vols. 13, 1967, Vols. 16-28. 1969-75.

Following division of labour, we focus here on the work of historians of the Hellenistic period and their contributions to graduate studies. Zaki 'Ali (born 1901), one of the founding fathers of the discipline, joined the faculty in 1928 after receiving his M. A. from the University of Liverpool. He published several papers in English on the Greek papyrus documents of the Ptolomys, and two works in Arabic on the Ptolomys. Zaki 'Ali trained one student; M. Abdel-Muhsin Khashab, who got his M.A. in 1935 and Ph.D. in 1947, with theses on the Greek numismatics in Egypt.

Ibrahim Nushi (born 1907) was more productive. He joined the faculty in 1938 after earning a Ph.D. from the University of London. His major four-volume work on the Ptolomys is a valuable reference. He also published a two-volume work on the Romans in addition to several papers in English in this area. In three decades, Nushi trained two students: M. 'Awwad Husayn, who wrote his M. A. (1941) and Ph.D. (1947) on the domestic policies of the Ptolomys and Farouk al-Qadi, who wrote his M. A. (1965) on the Decline of the Hellenistic States of the Eastern Mediterranean. The first became a professor at Alexandria University. The second is a professor at 'Ain Shams University. In the last two decades (1980s-1990s) Nushi trained about ten students in the history of Egypt under the Ptolomys, with a special interest in economic and social developments.

There are limited efforts graduate studies focusing on the Hellenistic period. These are primarily associated with Abdel-Latif Ahmad 'Ali and Sayed al-Nasiri, of Cairo University, and Lutfi Abdel-Wahab and Mustafa Al-'Abbadi, of Alexandria University. Limited enrolments in graduate studies of the Hellenistic period are due to the stiff prerequisites, such as background in classical literature archaeology.

b) Medieval History. The scarcity of achievement in the field of ancient history. Abdel-Hamid Al-'Abbadi (1891-1957), the founding father of medieval Islamic history, made a very limited contribution to graduate studies, but his contribution was of a good quality. He trained two students: Husayn Mu'nis (born 1911), who became a prominent historian of the Andalus, and Gamal Eddin al-Shayyal (1911-67), the highly respected scholar of Islamic history and professor at Alexandria University.

Hassan Ibrahim Hassan (1892-1968) and Muhammad Mustafa Ziyada (1900-68) made significant contributions to studies of medieval Islamic history through their own works and those of their students.

Hassan was educated in the Higher School of Teachers, received a B.A. from the private Egyptian University (1919) and a Doctorate (1920). He then went to Liverpool for his Ph.D. He published a three-volume general history of Islam from the early beginnings of the Mongol invasion and the elimination of the 'Abbasids in 1258 using primary sources of medieval Muslim historians and the works of European orientalist. The work still serves as a test book and was reprinted ten times in four decades (1935-74). He also published a two-volume work on the Fatimids in addition to a number of papers and translations.

Hassan's outstanding achievement was in graduate studies. Influenced by the political environment and intellectual debates over the Caliphate in the 1920s and 1930s, he directed his students to study topics on Islamic Egypt. Among his students, Sayyida Al-Kashif (born 1920) studied the early period of Islam in Egypt, the Tulunids and Ikhshids. Her works are valuable references on the subject. M. Gamal Eddin Surur (1917-93) studied the Fatimids, succeeded his professor in the chair at Cairo University and trained most of the faculty of Egyptian and Arab universities on the history of 'Abbasids and Fatimids. Rashid Al-Barrawi, the well-known economic historian who showed an interest in socialism and Marxism in the mid 1940s was also a student of Hassan. He wrote his Ph.D. thesis on the Economic Development of Egypt under the Fatimids and occupied the chair of economic history at the Faculty of Commerce in Cairo University. Hassan Ahmad Mahmud (born 1916), professor at Cairo University, studied under Hassan and focused on Islam in the Maghrib and West Africa. He trained a number of students in this area, among them Mahmud Isma'il of 'Ain Shams University.

It seems that Hassan Ibrahim Hassan followed a division of labour by directing his students to specialize in certain areas focusing on medieval Islam in Egypt from the Arab conquest to the end of the Mamluks, giving less attention to the Abbasids and Andalus.

M. Mustafa Ziyada made a remarkable contribution to the study of medieval Islam in Egypt but focused on the Ayyubids and Mamluks. He earned his Ph.D. from Liverpool University with a thesis on the foreign relations of Egypt in the fifteenth century (1930). His publications in English include: *Egypt and the Crusades* (1942), and the *Egyptian in the Cyprus* (1943). His Arabic publications include: *The Military Efforts of the Mamluks in Rhodes* (1949), *The End of the Mamluks* (1951), *The Crusade of Louis IX* (1951), and *Egyptian Historiography in the Fifteenth Century* (1949). Ziyada translated some books on the history of medieval Europe and Pioneered editing the works of medieval Muslim historians. The great historian al-Maqrizi captured his interest. Ziyada edited al-Maqrizi's *al-Suluk* and published the first the first two volumes in six parts (1934-58). The work was completed after Ziyada's death by his student Sa'id 'Ashour. Ziyada also edited *Ighathat al-Umma*, another work of al-Maqrizi. He is considered to be a master of the art of editing. His tradition has been followed by two of his eminent students: Sa'id 'Ashour and Hassan Habashi. They edited and published a number of primary sources and trained a generation of students.⁷

Ziyada directed his graduate students to study the history of Egypt under the Ayyubids and Mamluks, focusing on foreign relations, and Islamic institutions. One his students, Sa'id 'Ashour (born 1921), succeeded him in Mamluks, Most of these are now working at Egyptian and Arab universities. Among them are Qasim Abdu Qasim, of Zagazig University, and 'Adil Zaytun, of Damascus University.

Ziyada's second student was al-Baz al-'Arini, who wrote on the Ayyubids and the Crusades. His contribution to graduate studies is limited. Hassanien Rabie' was trained by him and wrote his M. A. thesis of the financial system of Egypt under the Ayyubids under al-'Arini's guidance.

Hassan Habashi was the third eminent student of Ziyada. He obtained his M. A. with a thesis on the history of the Crusades. Habashi produced several works on the Crusades, edited some primary

⁷Speech by Sa'id 'Ashour in the Memory of M. M. Ziyada, *The Egyptian Historical Review*, Vol. 13, 1967, vols. 16-28, 1969-75.

sources, and translated books related to this area of academic interest. He trained a number of students at Ain Shams University.

We cannot conclude a survey of academic work on medieval history without mentioning ‘Aziz Suryal ‘Attiya (1898-1988). He started his career at Cairo University, where he shared the burden of forging a discipline. He was the founder of studies on medieval history at Alexandria University, where he stayed for almost a decade before immigrating to the US in the mid-1950s to pursue a prominent career as a scholar of medieval Islam. Most of his works are published in English but his interpretation reflects an Egyptian identity. Despite his relative short career in Egypt, ‘Aziz Suryal ‘Attiya made a significant contribution to graduate studies at Alexandria University. He trained two remarkable students: Joseph Nasim Youssef, who became professor of medieval history at Alexandria, and Subhi Yanni Labib, who contributed to the study of the social and economic history of medieval Islam in German universities and earned a reputation among western scholars.

c) Modern History. As the founding fathers of medieval history in Egypt focused on the Islamic heritage of Egypt, the founder of studies of modern history highlighted a different aspect of Egypt.

Muhammad Shafik Ghorbal (1894-1961) initiated this trend in Egyptian historiography. He shared with his colleagues a common educational background. He was a graduate of the Higher School of Teachers (1915), held a B. A. in history from Liverpool University (1919), and an M. A. from London University (1925), where he was trained by Arnold Toynbee. He was appointed associate professor of modern history at Cairo University (1929) and became the first Egyptian to hold the chair after the retirement of the British historian A. J. Grant (1936). Unlike Hassan, Ziyada, Attiya, and Nushi, Ghorbal produced few publications. His masterpiece is *The Beginning of the Egyptian Question* and *The Rise of Muhammad 'Ali* (London, 1928). He also published two monographs on Muhammad 'Ali (1944) and the making of modern Egypt (1955), and two papers. His style of

writing and interpretation made these works models of modern historiography.⁸

Taking advantage of royal interest in the re-writing of Egypt's modern history, Ghorbal initiated a new trend by trying to balance the works of European historians on the subject and encouraging graduate students to study major nineteenth century developments in Egypt by examining documents in the Royal Historical Archives. Some of his students became remarkable historians. Among these were Ahmad 'Ezzat Abdel-Karim (1909-80), who wrote on the history of education and established the discipline at 'Ain Shams University, Abul-Futuh Radwan, founder of the Faculty of Education, Ahmad al-Hitta, the economic historians, Hassan 'Uthman, who introduced Dante to an Arab audience, Rif' at Ramadan, who tackled subjects related to Ottoman Egypt, and Ibrahim' Abdu, the founder of the Journalism Department at Cairo University.

In addition to his achievements in Arabizing the history curriculum at Cairo University and training cadres, Ghorbal was a talented academic organizer. The Royal Historical studies Society, founded in 1945 under the auspices of King Farouk, was Ghorbal's creation. In his capacity as under-secretary of the Ministry of Education in the 1940s, he could send students to be trained at British and French universities. Among those sent in the post-war years were scholars who subsequently contributed to the development of the discipline in Cairo, 'Ain Shams, and Alexandria universities: Ahmad Abdel-Rahim Mostafa, Hassan Habashi, Muhammad Anis, al-'Abbadi, Sa'ad Zaghlul Abdel-Hamid, Sayyid Abdel-Hamid, Sayyid Abdel-'Aziz Salim, and Galal Yehia.⁹

Ghorbal's achievements and influence overshadowed the work of two other colleagues who started their careers at the time: Muhammad Rif'at (1893-1985) and Muhammad Sabri (1894-1978). Rif'at, like

⁸Speeches given on the Memory of Ghorbal, op. cit., Vol. 11, 1963.

⁹For details on historiography of modern and contemporary Egypt, see: Gumay'i, Abdel-Mun'im, *Ittijahat al-Kitaba al-Tarikhyya fi Tarikh Misr al-Hadith wal-Mu'asir* (Trends of Historical writings on Modern and contemporary Egypt) (Cairo, 1994); Meijer, Roel, "Contemporary Egyptian Historians of the Period 1936-52: A Study of its Scientific and Political Character", M. A. thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1985.

Ghorbal, was educated at the Higher School to Teachers, held a B. A. in history from Liverpool University, and received his M. A. from that same university in 1924 under Charles Webster. His major work, *The Awakening of Modern Egypt* (London, 1947) covers political developments from Muhammad' Ali to the British Occupation. In his capacity as undersecretary of the Ministry of Education, he made a significant contribution to the Egyptianization of school system and wrote school text books on the modern history of Egypt.

Sabri was a man of a different caliber. After obtaining a baccalaureate in Egypt (1913), he was sent by his family to Paris to study in Sorbonne where he earned his B. A. and Doctorate in history. Pride in this background caused him to adopt the surname al-Sorboni. He became teacher of history at the Higher School of Teachers (1925) and then joined the faculty of Cairo University (1926). However, he could not get along with his colleagues and moved to the school of Dar al-'Ulum (1927). After a decade of teaching there, he held administrative assignments in the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister's Office.

During his years in Paris, Sabri had taken part in the Egyptian nationalist activities and societies himself with the Wafd in 1919. His early works were published in Paris. *La Révolution Egyptienne* (1919) and *La Question Egyptienne* (in two volumes 1921-22) addressed European Opinion and expounded Egyptian nationalist aspiration. He wrote his Doctorate on *La Genèse de L'Espirit National Egyptien* (Paris, 1924). In this work, Sabri sought to discover the roots of Egyptian nationalism in the movement of 'Ali Beg al-Kabir in the eighteenth century and trace the growth of the Egyptian national consciousness to the 'Urabi revolution (1881-82). In the 1930s, Sabri published two major works in French: *L'Empire Egyptien sous Mohamed' Ali et La Question d'Orient 1811-41*, and *L'Empire Egyptien sous Isma'il 1863-79*. These utilized the environmental determination approach. His works in Arabic also reflected this approach: *The Role of Egypt in East Africa* (1939), *The Sudanese Empire in the Nineteenth Century* (1947), and *The Suez Canal* (1958). His early departure from the university did not give him opportunity

to train graduate students, but his approach to the study of modern history of Egypt influenced a generation of scholars.

The achievements of the founding fathers were supplemented by the efforts of their students and disciples. Among these were Ahmed 'Ezzat Abdel-Karim, Muhammad Fuad Shokri, Muhammad Anis, and Ahmad Abdel-Rahim Mostafa.

Abdel-Karim was a devoted disciple of Ghorbal. He participated in the Arabization of textbooks at Cairo University and the Ministry of Education. His publications included a three-volume work on the history of education, several papers related to the modern history of the Arabs, an edited volume of al-Budayri's manuscript on the events of Damascus in the eighteenth century, and translation of histories of modern Europe. But Abdel-Karim's outstanding achievement was, like Ghorbal's, in the training of academic cadres. He founded the discipline at 'Ain Shams University. He directed his graduate students to explore the histories of the Ottomans and modern Arab countries. He also promoted interest in social history by encouraging students to tackle subjects related to the social history of modern Egypt. It is obvious that Egypt's political and intellectual development in the 1950s and 1960s was behind Abdel-Karim's interest in modern Arab history. He applied a division of labor by advising each of his students to focus on particular areas in this field.¹⁰

Among the students of Abdel-Karim we find the names of outstanding scholars such as; Ahmad Abdel-Rahim Mostafa, historian of modern Egypt, Abdel-'Aziz Nawwar, who specializes in modern Iraq, Gamal Zakariyya Qasim, a student of the modern history of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, Yunan Labib Rizk, who focuses on modern Egypt and the Sudan, Raouf 'Abbas Hamed, who deals with the social history of modern Egypt, Abdel-Rahim Abdel-Rahman, of Ottoman Egypt. These disciples of Abdel-Karim in turn, trained a generation of students in their respective universities: 'Ain Shams, Cairo, and al-Azhar.

¹⁰Ahmad 'Ezzat Abdel-Karim attracted attention of both Arab and Western scholars, see: Gumay'i, op. cit., pp. 80-81, 195-203; Guiseppe Contu, Ahmad 'Ezzat Abdel-Karim 1909-80, "Storico Arabo contemporaneo" in Studi Arabo-Islamic in onore di Roberto Rubinacci, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli, 1985, Vol. pp. 219-38.

Muhammad Fuad Shokri (1904–63) succeeded Ghorbal in Cairo University, earned his Ph.D. from Liverpool University (1935), joined the faculty in 1936 and became professor in 1952. He produced massive works on the history of Egypt in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Sudan, and the making of modern Libya in addition to text books on the modern history of Europe. His contribution to graduate studies related to these areas and to East Africa. He had a particular interest in Ranke.

Muhammad Anis (1921-86) belonged to a younger generation of scholars coming from a different social and political background. He graduated from Cairo University (1943) and was sent to the University of Birmingham in England after World War II (1947). He earned his Ph.D. in 1950 and joined the faculty of Cairo University in 1951. Influenced by the developments of the postwar years, Anis focused his academic effort on the study of the nationalist movement in Egypt. He had a particular interest in primary sources; personal memories and private papers. He organized a press campaign at the beginning of the 1960s calling for the collection primary sources and the foundation of the center for studies on contemporary Egypt. This campaign resulted in the acquisition of memories and private papers of some nationalist leaders by the Egyptian National Archives (Dar al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya), and the establishment of the Center of Contemporary History of Egypt in 1964 as a department of the Minister of Culture. Anis served as director. In the field of graduate studies, Anis had his students study topics contemporary history of Egypt and Arab countries, the Palestinian Question, and social history. He stressed historical materialism as an interpretive framework. His best students in the area of contemporary history were Abdel-'Azim Ramadan, Adil Ghunaim, and Latifa Salim. 'Ali Barakat was trained by Anis in the area of social history. Many others are influenced by his approach and consider themselves disciples of Anis.¹¹

Ahmad Abdel-Rahim Mostafa (born 1925) was the first student of A. 'Ezzat Abdel-Karim, who supervised his M.A. at Cairo University. He was sent to London University in 1952, where he earned his Ph.D.

¹¹Gumay'i, op. cit., pp. 213-26.

under the British orientalist Harold Bowen (1956). He published several works on the political development of modern Egypt, focusing on the European penetration and the British Occupation. His style of writing, analysis, and liberal approach influenced a generation of 'Ain Shams students. His achievement in graduate studies relates to the contemporary history of Egypt with special emphasis on the role of political leadership. He shared Anis's interest in social history and directed his students to take up this area. He trained two outstanding scholars: Abdel-Khaliq Lashin and 'Asim al-Desouqi.

The achievements of the founding fathers of the study of modern history, and those of their disciples, show that they were more receptive to new approaches and ideas than their colleagues who focused on ancient and medieval history. The former were also more influenced by the political and social changes of the 1950s and 1960s. They shouldered the burden of training enough academic cadres for a growing number of universities in Egypt and other Arab countries.

The Outsiders and Their Writings

Besides the achievements of professional historians, a remarkable contribution to historiography has been made by a group of intellectuals who were not educated or trained to be historians but who nevertheless were interested in history. Some liberal intellectuals such as Taha Hussyn, Muhammad Hussayn Haykal, Mahmud' Abbas al-'Aqqad, Ahmad Amin, and 'Abdalla Inan published works in the interwar period that tried to re-interpret Islam and the Islamic historical heritage in the light of modern ideas put forth by European liberal thinkers. Some nationalist writers were attracted to history in order to discover the roots of modern Egypt. Among these can be cited Amin Sami, Abdel-Rahman al-Raf'i, and Tariq al-Bishri. Others were socialists and applied historical materialism in the study of Egyptian history. Among these can be listed Fawzi Girgis, Ibrahim 'Amir, Shuhdi Attiya al-Shaf'i, Lewis 'Awad and Rif'at al-Sa'id.

These writers produced valuable contributions that were based on primary sources and applied methods and styles used by professional historians. They gained recognition as basic works often cited by the professionals themselves.

a) Liberals. The historical writings of liberal Egyptian intellectuals came in response to a growing Muslim-oriented opposition to a nationalist orientation that was based on ancient cultural heritage and westernization. This Muslim-oriented trend was calling for Egyptian society to formulate its collective identity, culture and history on the basis of Islam rather than the West or the Pharaonic past. The leading liberal intellectuals sought to rationalize this trend by reinterpreting Islamic history.

Two voluminous biographies of Mohammed were written by Taha Husayn and M. Husayn Hykal. Both wrote on the area of Rashidun, but the work of Taha Husayn on the first Muslim civil war (al-Fitna al-Kubra) is of great significance as it shows how far politics went beyond the ethics and values of Islam. M. 'Abbas al-'Aqqad published biographies of great leaders of early Islam. Ahmed Amin spent two decades of his academic career writing a seven-volume work on the history of Arabic and Islamic intellectual heritage, an extensive study of the first four centuries of Islam. He also compiled biographical studies of modern Muslim reformers. M. 'Abdalla 'Inan, who started his intellectual career as an essayist advocating the idea of Egyptian nationalism, made it his lifetime concern to write books on the history of Islam and Muslim culture in the Andalus.¹²

b) Nationalist. The historical writings of the nationalist are different. They tried to explore characteristics of modern Egypt in the light of their political affiliation. Amin Sami was an exception. Being an educator, Amin Sami wrote on the history of education, his massive contribution to the study of history of modern Egypt is *Taqwim al-Nil* (the Nile Chronology), a five-volume work on nineteenth century Egypt with numerous citations from the Archives of 'Abdin. Amin Sami focused on various aspects of development up to the end of the 1870s and highlighted Egypt's qualities as modern state.

Abdel Rahman al Raf'i was a devoted nationalist politician, disciple of the nationalist leader Muhammad Farid, cadre of the Nationalist Party (al-Hizb al-Watani), and a well-known lawyer. His lifetime mission

¹²For details see: Nadav Safran, *Egypt in Search of Political Community: An Analysis of the Intellectual and Political Evolution of Egypt, 1804-1952* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961); Charles Smith, *Islam and the Search for Social Order in Modern Egypt* (Albany, 1983).

was to write a history of the Egyptian nationalist movement to balance the works of the monarchist historians by presenting people's role in history. His fifteen-volume work covered historical events from the French Expedition of 1798-1801 to the end of 1950s. It was published over the course of three decades (1938-1959). He used available primary sources but did not have access to the Royal Historical Archives of 'Abdin. His analysis and interpretation reflect his political attitude, focusing on the role of nationalist elite in history, underestimating the 'Urabi revolution and the achievements of the Wafd Party. Al-Raf'i adopted a biased position towards his party (al-Hizb al-Watani) and reappraised political developments of contemporary Egypt within this trend.

Tarik al-Bishri shared al-Raf'i's educational background but had a different political orientation. He is influenced by the political environment of the last three decades (1960s-1990s). His major work, *The Political Movement in Egypt: 1945-52* (Cairo, 1972), reflects the political discourses of the 1960s and the influence of a social approach to his analysis and interpretation. His second significant work, *Copts and Muslims within the Framework of National Community* (Cairo, 1980), marks a turning point in his political orientation and advocate the need for reinterpreting history in the light of the Muslim cultural heritage.¹³

c) Socialists. Ever since the 1940s socialism has attracted Egyptian intellectuals who, seeking solutions to the country's social and political problems, found in it an appealing intellectual avenue.

By the mid-1950s, three communist activities published works on Egypt's history using Marxist interpretation. Fawzi Girgis surveyed the history of Egypt after the Mamluks, trying hard to emphasize class conflict as means for change. Shuhdi Attiya al-Shaf'i wrote on the Egyptian nationalist movement within the Leninist concept of imperialism. Ibrahim' Amir followed the same tradition in his work on the Egyptian nationalist revolution and his work on land tenure and the peasantry in Egypt. These three writers adopted a selective

¹³See: Hamada Isma'il, Abdel-Rahman al-Raf'i wa Sina'at-Tarikh fi Misr (Abdel-Rahman al-Raf'i and the making of history of Egypt) (Cairo, 1990).

approach and tried hard to cast history of Egypt in a Marxist mold. Their works served as models of socialist interpretation of history and encouraged some professional historians, including Muhammad Anis young historians of the 1960s, to adopt this method.

Lewis 'Awad, the acclaimed scholar and man of letters, made a remarkable contribution to the history of modern Egyptian thought. In a three-volume work published between 1980 and 1986, 'Awad looked at trends of thought in the last three decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. He approached his subject within a Marxist framework focusing on the dialectic relation between infra and super structure in society.

Rif'at al-Sa'id published six works on the history of communist organizations in Egypt from the early beginnings of the movement to the mid-1960s. He used primary sources and oral testimonies of communist activities. He exhibited a favorable bias toward the Democratic Movement of National Liberation (HADITU), to which he belonged, but his works gave a new dimension to the studies on the contemporary history of Egypt.¹⁴

Subject Matter

The subject matter of Egyptian historiography in the twentieth century mirrored Egypt's political and intellectual environment: the rise of nationalism, the reaction of Muslim-oriented political movements, imperialism, the Question of Palestine, Arab nationalism, and the debate on the issue of development—capitalist versus socialist.

In the interwar period, the works of Egyptian historians reflected a crisis of identity. Being liberals and supporters of Egyptian national orientation, the founding fathers of modern Egyptian historiography emphasized the argument the Egypt's history provided an essential unifying base. Historical writings focused on one idea, but no attempt was made to coordinate or integrate the efforts of specialist of different historical periods.

We can trace the influence of environmental determinism, which argues that both geographical location and natural resources shaped

¹⁴Works of al-Bishri and al-Sa'id are discussed by Raol Meijer in details. See: footnote 9 above.

the history of Egypt and gave it assimilative properties. It further asserts the unity of Egyptian history. This is obvious in the works of the founding fathers and those of their disciples in the decades falling between 1920s and 1950s.

Periods in which Egypt was reduced to the level of a province of an empire are overlooked or given little attention. Such neglect has generally befallen the Romance and Byzantine periods, early decades of Muslim Empire, and the centuries of Ottoman rule. Nevertheless, a limited number of works on these periods can be found, including works on Coptic culture. Significant attention has been paid to periods in which Egypt achieved de facto independence, such as under the Tulundis, Ikhshids, Fatimids, and Mamluks. Periods which witnessed tendencies toward independence, as those of 'Ali Beq al-Kabir in the eighteenth century and Mohammed' Ali in the nineteenth, have also been stressed. Even studies of Islamic civilization highlighted the contribution of Egypt in various aspects.

After World War II, diversity of subject matter reflected the political and intellectual developments of the decades between the 1940s and the 1960s. Growing interest in economic and social history could be seen in graduate studies regardless of the methods used. Interest in the struggle for independence and the Palestinian Question were reflected in studies of Andalus, the Crusades, European imperialism, movements of national liberation, and the movement of Arab nationalism. As the Sudan was considered an integral part of Egypt up to the conclusion of the Anglo-Egyptian Agreement of 1953, it captured the attention of Egyptian historians. An Institute of Sudanese Studies was founded by Cairo University in 1947 to promote this academic interest. In 1954, it was turned into an Institute of African Studies to denote a new dimension in both political and intellectual interests.

Editing and publication primary sources constituted a good part of scholarly effort. Some scholars encouraged students to do graduate these by editing and analyzing a primary source. Limited efforts were made to edit and publish papyrus documents from ancient and medieval Egypt. However, most work in this area was done on medieval and Ottoman manuscripts. Some memories and diaries of

politicians and leaders of the nationalist movement were also edited, studied and published in the last two decades.

Styles and Methods of Writing

The founders of modern Egyptian historiography belonged to a unique intellectual generation whose formative years were the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. They had a universal education in which their Arab Muslim cultural heritage had been belonged with European thought: Spencer's social evolutionism, Comte's positive theory, Mill's liberalism, Taine's environmental determinism. They were familiar with the writing of Carlyle, Guizot, Renan and Rousseau. Trained in the University of Liverpool, most of them were influenced by the school of Ranke, which dominated at that institution up to the 1930s. It was the work of the founding fathers to introduce European methods into Egyptian scholarship and apply them in their own writings.

The influence of Ranke's thought can be traced in most of their works as well as those of their students. These were marked by concern over documentation, careful investigation of evidence, and the reconstruction of historical events by comparison, analysis, and deduction. They were almost hesitant of forge syntheses and always very cautious in their conclusions. The work of Hassan Ibrahim Hassan, M. Mustafa Ziyada, Fuad Shukri, and two successive generations of their students reflect these characteristics in various degrees.

The idea of Arnold Toynbee and his concept of challenge and response were introduced by Ghorbal, who tried to interpret Muslim history as response to the challenge of the West, but who emphasized the role of the elite. For him, people of a given society are tools of change manipulated by leaders of genius. Ghorbal's style and method served as model of historical writings for his disciples and their students.

In the late 1940s, interest in the socialist interpretation of history was shown by a new generation of Egyptian historians. In 1947, Rashid al-Barrawi published a selection of Engles' writings on the socialist

interpretation of history with an introduction criticizing the attitude of Egyptian historians who overlook material factors in the historical process. He called for a new approach based on historical materialism. A few years later, the works of the three communist activities: Girgis, 'Amir and al-Shafe'i provided models of the application of this approach to the history of Egypt.

In the mid-1960s, Muhammad Anis published his work on the development of Egyptian society, applying historical materialism to his analysis and interpretation. Despite the shortcomings and generalization of Anis's work, a young generation of graduate students was fascinated by the new approach. Some young historians in the 1960s wrote M.A. and Ph.D. theses on Egypt's social history, utilizing historical materialism as a framework.

Extensive use of primary sources, both Egyptian and European, was common from the beginning of modern Egyptian historiography. In the 1960s, primary sources came to include: Shar'iah Court records, Waqf documents, periodicals, private papers and memories. In studies on contemporary history, oral testimonies of political activists are now also cautiously used to make up for the scarcity of documents.

Current Problems

There are some problems that may adversely affect the future development of historiography in Egypt. These include shortcomings in the history curricula in Egyptian universities, lack of methodological training, absence of professional coordination, and the deterioration of conditions at the Public Archives. Such problems require corrective action if Egyptian historiography is to develop adequately.

a) History Curricula. History programs in Egyptian universities remain too limited. Typically, they fail to include exposure to such indispensable field as sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science. No courses on world history, cultural history, or the histories of Asia and the American are included. Graduate students have to make up for this by their own efforts.

b) Methodological Training. Egyptian historians very much depend on Western methodology. However, shortage of funds and financial

problems have made Egyptian universities unable to maintain convenient channels of contact with international scholarship. Only a few Egyptian historians enjoy strong contacts with foreign academic circles due to international recognition of their remarkable achievements.

c) Absence of Coordination. The Egyptian Historical Studies Society has made some effort to coordinate historical research. However, such efforts became useless after the foundation of provincial universities in the early 1970s. Coordination of research then became beyond capabilities of the EHSS. The Supreme Council of Universities has so far failed to adopt a plan to establish national Graduate School to handle the process of coordination. The absence of coordination causes wasted effort and overlap of research work.

d) Conditions of the Archives. Egypt's National Archives have suffered disorder due to moving to three different places within two decades, inefficiency of its staff, and the absence of modern technical facilities. Its affiliation to the Ministry of Culture has caused it to suffer bureaucratic and financial difficulties that are reflected in the deterioration of documents and service.

Besides the Egyptian National Archives, historical documents are housed in the archives of three other ministries: Awqaf, Justice, and Finance. It is not possible to have access to these archives without going through complicated procedures. Collections of historical documents in these three archives are no better condition than those in the National Archives: they desperately need maintenance, classification, and the modernization of service.

Three more archives house documents pertaining to the contemporary history of Egypt: the Presidency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Interior. However, access to them is restricted. It is difficult to write an objective history of post-1952 Egypt without access to these documents.

If Egyptian historians could overcome these difficulties, they would undoubtedly make even more significant contributions to historiography.