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# INTELLECTUAL DECOLONIZATION AND HARMFUL NATIVISM: ARABIC KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN LITERATURE

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**Postcolonial theory in literature**  
**Arabic as a sacred language**  
**Arabic loanwords**  
**Arabic Poetics**  
**History of Egyptology**  
.....  
*The essay argues that Eurocentric modernity continues to impact how ancient Egyptian language and literature is experienced, researched, and taught in Arabic-speaking Egypt as a direct result of its colonial history. It explores some reasons and justifications for the omission of Egyptian Egyptologists from the century-long formation and evolution of ancient Egyptian literary and linguistic studies. This hegemonic approach still causes intellectual suffering for those who were/are colonized. The essay seeks to deploy analytical approaches from the Arabic literary tradition to decolonize the overwhelming and illogical divorce between linguistic and literary studies. A comparative reading of ancient Egyptian literary devices provides the grounds for a further argument, which concerns more broadly the ways in which scholars should approach the literary devices of ancient Egyptian texts, and opens the door to previously unexplored literary and linguistic approaches. The aim of this essay is to investigate the possibility of offering a new and a closer textual reading of ancient Egyptian literary devices, based on Arabic balāghah methodology (literally, eloquence, and*

*roughly translated as poetics). This comparative approach demonstrates that Arabic scholarship can reclaim a respected space in the knowledge production that re/defines the cultural heritage of ancient Middle Eastern literature(s). The essay calls upon Euro-American and Arab academics to endorse various methodologies of “intellectual decolonization” in order to avoid reinscribing the long-established Eurocentric elements of coloniality and to invest more deliberate efforts in helping ancient Middle Eastern literary cultures to speak for themselves without any impositions rooted in Eurocentrism or Arabocentrism.*

Colonialism is not simply content to impose its rule upon the present and the future of a dominated country. Colonialism is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts it, disfigures and destroys it. (Frantz Fanon 1996, 238)

Every empire, however, tells itself and the world that it is unlike all other empires, that its mission is not to plunder and control but educate and liberate. (Edward Said, as quoted in Clines 2020, 482)

### **Arabocentric roots of harmful nativism**

For several decades every Egyptian student of Egyptology has had to face this enduring paradox: the absence of any reliable materials written in Arabic that study the ancient Egyptian (henceforth AE) language philologically. To date (2022), no direct Arabic translation, with philological and poetic commentaries, exists for AE literary texts, religious corpora (Pyramid Texts, Coffin Texts, Book of the Dead), historical inscriptions, or even more famous literary compositions such as the Dialogue of a Man and his Soul. Only secondary translations have been produced, from German, French, and English. The most influential publication presenting Arabic translations by Selim Hassan, the foremost excavator of Egyptian Egyptology of the early twentieth century, has been reprinted six times, but, like many others, derives literally from the German anthology of Adolf Erman. Selim Hassan translated literally all the parts of Adolf Erman’s anthology, even Erman’s philological comments (Rashwan 2020a, 109). This means that all the modern Egyptian novels inspired by ancient Egyptian culture, such as Naguib Mahfouz’s stories of ancient Egypt, were based on secondary translations that have little to do with AE poetics or the original meanings.

Inside Egypt at present, no academic program at the Master or Doctoral level offers direct Arabic translation from AE literary output. Compounding

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this absence of literary studies, there is still no AE – Arabic dictionary to set beside the European ones, beyond a single small volume not ranked among the standard reference works of the discipline (Badawi and Kees 1958). Nor is there any Arabic book for AE grammar to match the research standards of AE in European languages. The few recent grammar books, written in Arabic, extract AE examples and categorization from the methods and views of Euro-American AE grammar references (Hammad 1991; Nur El-Din 1998; Fathi 2010). These references are like those blonde foreigners who dress in the traditional clothes of upper Egyptian women simply because of fashion. The authors of these books did not formulate their grammatical examples, lessons, terms, and concepts by engaging directly with critical readings of the AE texts. Egyptian professors continue to depend on Gardiner’s (1957) grammar. Egyptian students have to learn by heart the English grammatical terms that Gardiner used, without even realizing what they mean in Eurocentric linguistic practice.

The dominant concern of Egyptian Egyptologists has been focused for the last century on archaeological and religious rather than AE literary and linguistic studies (Ikram and Omar 2021). They have left AE language and literature to Egyptologists from countries with European languages, who have recreated linguistic and literary theories which draw on their Euro-American linguistic background. Biblical studies scholar Carl Ehrlich argues that the slow development of the Egyptian Egyptology school may be due to the religious beliefs of modern Egyptians, and that Islamic identity tended to eliminate feelings of kinship with or curiosity for an ancient pagan past:

While the predominantly Muslim world at home there kept alive the philosophical and scientific knowledge of the ancient classical world, knowledge of the even more ancient Near East had died with the civilisations that had constituted it. Nor did the indigenous cultures devote much attention to what came beforehand or its recovery, presumably in part because these ancient civilisations belonged to the “Age of Ignorance” (*jahiliyah*) before the rise of Islam. (Ehrlich 2009, 2)

This argument carries some weight given the negative image that conservative Muslims tend to paint of pre-Islamic cultures.<sup>1</sup> For example, the Arabic word *faraʿūn* (meaning pharaoh) and its verb are always equated with dictatorship and tyranny. In his book “The secrets of vocal forms eloquence” (*Sirr al-faṣāḥah*), the literary critic Ibn Sanān al-Khafājī (d. 1073) criticized the famous Abbassid poet Abū Tammām (d. 845) for employing the “colloquial” verb *tafarʿan* in the expression “acted like a doomed Pharaoh” because it does not belong to standard Arabic vocabularies, but al-Khafājī also affirms its negative connotations in Muslim minds:

جليتْ والموت ميِّدْ حُسْر صفحته وقد تفرعن في أفعاله الأجلُ  
 فان – تفرعن – مشتق من إسم فرعون، وهو من ألفاظ العامة، وعادتهم أن يقولوا – تفرعن فلان – إذا وصفوه  
 بالجيرية .

You emerged while the death shows its regretful page, indeed the appointed time [of death] has acted like a doomed Pharaoh in its actions. The verb *tafar'an* is derived from the noun *fara'un* and it is of colloquial vocal forms. It is usually said that someone *tafar'an* when they describe an act of despotism. (al-Khafājī 1982, 73)

Similarly, several studies have been produced to serve the political chauvinism of Pan-Arabism. These studies deliberately ignore several historical facts concerning the ancient Near Eastern languages in order to glorify the sacred identity of Arabic and its political agenda. The Syrian scholar Bahjat al-Qubaisi goes even further and considers the Hieroglyphic and Coptic languages as dialects of Arabic. Thus, he labels them accordingly: the ancient Arabic Egyptian dialect (*al-lahjah al-'Arabyyah al-miṣrayyah al-qadimah*); and the dialect of Arabic Coptic (*al-lahjah al-'Arabyyah al-qibtyyah*). He justifies these terms by arguing that these “dialects” have been derived from Arabic – their mother language (al-Qubaisi 1999, 346). Many members of this chauvinistic school believe that Arabic is the oldest language on earth: Adam and Eve spoke Arabic and even Moses spoke Arabic with Allah. These religious hypotheses were heavily circulated in the popular Egyptian TV program during the 1980s and 1990s, “Science and Faith”.<sup>2</sup> A similar chauvinistic claim has been made by conservative Hebrew writers about the sacred nature of their own language as the only language of heaven and Adam (Ullendorff 1961, 15; see also Coudert 1999).

These Arabocentric scholars argue that all the ancient Semitic languages are various forms or shapes of Arabic. They use rediscovered lexical and grammatical similarities between these kindred languages to enforce their religious interpretations in public discussions. Under Gadhafi’s regime, the Libyan government supported Arabocentric scholars who were desperate to extend such ideas to cover all the ancient languages of the Middle East, especially ancient Egyptian, with a straightforward Arabic – Islamic coat. Members of this school twisted many historical facts to serve these political and religious preconceptions (e.g. Khushim 2007). This Arabic chauvinism and its rhetorical language can be shown in Emad Hatem’s preface to a book written by the Arabocentric Libyan scholar cited above, Ali Khushim, who authored several similar books. The book searches for the “historical” existence of Moses through the Qur’ānic narratives. In the book’s preface, the Syrian Arabocentric Emad Hatem argues that all the countries that speak Arabic should follow the same methodology which demonizes the “forged” pride of pre-Islamic civilizations in favour of an Arab collective identity<sup>3</sup> and its political agenda:

وحيدا لو تعتمد هذه النظرية الموضوعية الهامة منطلقا أساسيا لكتابة "تواريخنا" القديمة في جميع الأقطار العربية وبحزني أن أعترف للدكتور علي فهمي خشيم، ولكل الغيورين على الحقيقة العلمية، بأننا إلى أن نتحقق الوحدة العربية وبعدها سنظل بحاجة ماسة إلى أمثال هذه الدراسات العلمية التي تؤكد لنا حقيقتنا الواحدة وتضاعف من شعورنا بالتلاحم... وإن أفجع ما يمكن أن يتمخض عنه هذا الواقع المجزأ هو تفريخ الأوهام بأننا ننتمي إلى "أمم قديمة شتى" وحتى نتحقق الوحدة السياسية ستلاقي هذه الأوهام من ينفخ فيها ويضخمها ويحاول لباسها أثواب الحقيقة. وأذكر جيدا أن ومضة خاطفة سريعة من العودة الصحيحة إلى التاريخ الأصيل قد تألقت أيام الوحدة بين سوريا ومصر،... وانعكست هذه البدهية في برنامجنا التعليمي فانطوت كتب التلاميذ المدرسية على عبارة تقول: إن الفراعنة عرب وإن الفينيقيين عرب .

It would be preferable if this important and objective theory became the essential point to start writing our ancient "histories" in the whole Arab region. It saddens me to make a confession to Dr. Ali Fahmy Khushim and all the ardent scholars [who are keen to establish and rely] on scientific truth, that we are in desperate need of such scientific studies, which confirm to us [the notion of] our true unified nature and multiply our feelings of [community] cohesion until Arab union can be achieved. ... The most traumatic result of this subdivided reality is generating fantasies that we belong to "diverse ancient nations". These fantasies will always find someone who fills [their fire] with air and amplifies them by trying to dress them in the garments of truth until political union is achieved. I do remember well that a fast glimpse [of hope] about returning to the original history appropriately has been shone during the union between Egypt and Syria ... This intuition has been reflected in our educational program. Thus, the school books contained an expression that says: The Pharaohs are Arabs, and the Phoenicians are Arabs. (Khushim 2001, 18)

It is hard to unravel how much of this Arabic chauvinism stemmed from religious beliefs and how much may have reflected a more secular racial attitude related to Arab chauvinism which flourished during Gamal Abdel Nasser's (1956–1970) ideological movements.<sup>4</sup>

### **Tolerant medieval islamic scholarship on "Immigrant" words**

The chauvinism of these Arabocentric studies overlooks several comparative linguistic studies produced in medieval Islamic periods about the notion of "loanwords" in the Arabic lexicon. Many scholars accepted the fact that the Arabic language, from its early beginning, has adopted and adapted a considerable number of "foreign" words. These words were used in the Qur'ān and became original vocabulary in the lexicon of standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) (Rashwan 2020a, 162–171). One of the earliest interpretations of the Qur'ān is ascribed to the Umayyad commentator Muqātil ibn Sulaymān Al-Balkhī (d.767), who "made generous use of earlier commentaries without attribution, providing us with a valuable window into the opinions of the earliest exegetes from the first and second centuries of Islam" (Afsaruddin 2012, 48). In this commentary, Muqātil ibn Sulaymān

Al-Balkhī explains how the Qur’ānic language employed several “foreign” words and argues that investigating the meanings of these Qur’ānic words should be supported by exploring their semantics in the “foreign” languages from which they were adopted. He documents tens of “foreign” words in the Qur’ān and argues that this process is essential to understanding the Qur’ānic contexts. For example, the word مقاليد – *maqālīd* – in the Qur’ānic verse:

لَهُ مَقَالِيدُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ

To him belongs the controls (*maqālīd*) of heaven and earth; He enlarges provision for whom He wills, and straitens [for whom He wills]. (Qur’ān 42: 12)

Al-Balkhī argues that the precise meaning of *maqālīd* can be explored through the Nabataean language (a variety of the Eastern Aramaic languages), from which it was adopted. He explains that *maqālīd* means “keys” according to its original meaning, and thus the Qur’ānic verse is referring to the “keys of heaven which is rain” and the “keys of earth which is plants” (Al-Balkhī 2002, vol. 3, 765). Similarly, he argues that the word *firdaws* (فردوس) is extracted from Latin or what he called Roman language (*Lughat al-Rūm*), where it means orchards or groves that have been surrounded by walls (Al-Balkhī 2002, vol. 2, 604). He argues that this meaning would allow Muslims to better understand this Qur’ānic verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا

Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds – they will have the paradises of orchards (*firdaws*) as a lodging. (Qur’ān 18: 107)

Moreover, Al-Balkhī (2002, vol. 2, 59) confirms that the precise meaning of the word *Yamm* – يَم – is “sea” according to the Hebrew tongue (*lisān al’brā-nyyḥ*) in the Qur’ānic verse that describes the divine punishment of the Pharaoh’s people:

فَأَنزَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَاغْرَقْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا غَافِلِينَ

So, We exacted vengeance from them and drowned them in the sea (*Yamm*), as they belied Our revelations and were heedless of them. (Qur’ān 7: 136)

Another early Qur’ānic commentary follows the same methodology as Al-Balkhī in explaining the meaning of “strange” words in the Qur’ān. The book was ascribed to the prominent early Islamic scholar ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 687) and titled *Kitāb al-lughāt fī al-Qur’ān* (the book of languages inside the Qur’ān). This small dictionary investigates several “strange” words by explaining their meanings inside their foreign languages. The dictionary documented Qur’ānic words belong to several languages such as Persian,

Nabataean, Syriac, Amharic (Alḥabshyyh), Hebrew, Coptic, and Latin (Alrwmyyh). Moreover, the book investigates also the meanings of “strange” words that belong to various Arabic dialects. The book lists more than twenty-two Arabic dialects which were orally practised during the revelation of the Qur’ān, including Quraysh (قريش), Hudhayl (هذيل), Kanānah (كنانة), and Jarhm (جرهم).

This linguistic fact refutes the popular hypothesis that the Qur’ān was revealed only in the Arabic dialect of Quraysh. The writer treated the strange words rooted in Arabic dialects in a similar way to the strange words of foreign language origin. The book may indicate that many Arabs struggled during the early time of Islam to understand the meanings of such “strange” words without referring properly to their mother language or Arabic dialect. For example, Ibn ‘Abbās explains that the meaning of the expression *falā rftḥ* (فلا رفث) (Qur’ān 2: 197) is “no sexual intercourse” in the language of Madhḥij (منحج), while the expression *ḥijārat min sjiyl* (حجارة من سجيل) (Qur’ān 11: 82) means “stones [made] from clay” according to the language of Persia, and the expression *taḥtik saryyā* (تحتك سرياً) (Qur’ān 19: 24) means “under you, there is a narrow inlet of water from a river” according to the Syriac language.

One of the largest dictionaries of the Arabic language is “The Bride’s Crown from the Jewellery of Dictionary” (*Tāj al-‘arūs min jawāhir al-qāmūs*), which was compiled by the Indian scholar of Arabic lexicography Al-Murtaḍā al-Husaynī al-Zabīdī (d. 1790), who was also proficient in both Persian and Ottoman. This dictionary took al-Zabīdī fourteen years to complete and it consists of eleven volumes and 11,800 words (Reichmuth 2009, 54). In the dictionary’s preface al-Zabīdī quotes the Arabic philologist of Persian origin Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Sallām (d. 838) in mediating between the two arguments on how hundreds of foreign words were integrated into the Qur’ān and became an original part of the Arabic language:

والصواب عندي مذهب فيه تصديقُ القولين جميعاً، وذلك أنّ هذه الأحرف أصولها أعجمية، كما قال الفقهاء، إلا أنّها سقطت إلى العرب فأعربتها بالسنتها، وحولتها عن ألفاظ العجم إلى ألفاظها، ثم نزل القرآن وقد اختلطت هذه الحروف بكلام العرب، فمن قال إنّها عربية، فهو صادق، ومن قال إنّها عجمية فصادق .

For me, the right approach is to believe (*tasidiq*) the two opinions. As the experts [of Arabic language] said, these letters [of foreign words] are of foreign origin (*Aajamiyah*); however, when they have been dropped on the Arabs, their tongues Arabized them. Their tongues turned the vocal forms of these foreign nations and they became like their own words. Then, the Qur’ān came down [from heaven] while these letters [of foreign words] were already blended with the speech of Arabs. Therefore, whoever says that these letters [of foreign words] are Arabic, he says the truth; and whoever says that they are foreign, he says the truth. (al-Zabīdī 1965, 27–28)



The linguistic affinities between the Arabic and Semitic languages were investigated in several premodern studies, and premodern scholars never claimed that Arabic is the origin of Semitic languages in order to serve a religious chauvinism towards Arabic as a sacred language. We find the renowned Andalusian theologian and philosopher Abū Muḥammad ‘Alī ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) concluding that the Arabic and Hebrew languages are close sisters and that their shared affinities have been generated from the same mother language. Ibn Ḥazm even argues that the Syriac language, a dialect of Aramaic, is the mother of both languages, Arabic and Hebrew:

من تدبر العربية والعبرانية والسريانية أيقن أن اختلافهما إنما هو من تبديل ألفاظ الناس على طول الأزمان واختلاف البلدان ومجاورة الأمم، وأنها لغة واحدة في الأصل. وإذا قد تيقنا ذلك فالسريانية أصل للعربية وللعبرانية معا. Whoever considers carefully [the shared linguistic affinities] of the Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac [languages], would realize that their differences are only a result of people altering the vocal forms through long time scales, and the different [nature and habits of these] countries and being neighbours [of different] nations, [but] they are one language in origin. If we realized that, then [we can say] the Syriac is the origin of both Arabic and Hebrew [languages]. (Ibn Ḥazm 1983, vol. 1, 32)

The chauvinistic treatments of the Arabocentric studies, cited earlier, overlook not only the comparative linguistic studies produced in medieval Islamic periods but also several modern studies, produced in Arabic, that challenge weak hypotheses by investigating the close Arabic – Semitic relationships using a comparative and historical methodology. For example, the scholar of Arabic linguistics ‘Abd al-‘Aẓīm al-Shā‘ir investigated the “foreign” roots and meanings of each place and prophet’s name mentioned in the Qur’ān. He made it clear that modern Arabs should not feel embarrassed or attacked by the fact that there are many “foreign” words in the Qur’ān, as all the languages of the world went through this process and no language has ever been generated without productively engaging with other surrounding languages (al-Shā‘ir 2004, 7).

In his thorough investigation of the Arabic etymological theory of the nineteenth-century Arabist Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq (d. 1887), the distinguished Arabic linguist Ramzy Baalbaki explored several benefits of recognizing the Semitic roots of Arabic words. Baalbaki corrected many etymological hypotheses of al-Shidyāq by investigating the ancient Greek and Semitic origins of these words. Ramzy Baalbaki was able to highlight the importance of learning ancient Semitic languages to avoid producing such a weak hypothesis about the original roots and meanings of these words. He offered several examples in which al-Shidyāq could not offer the right etymological interpretation by only looking at and using the Arabic language, such as the word *Al-turjumān* (التُرْجُمَان – “the translator”) and

how its root (رجم) r-g-m was coined from speech activities in several Semitic languages such as Aramaic, Hebrew, Akkadian, Amharic, and Ugaritic (Baalbaki 2016, 280–282). In his dictionary of Arabic words that have a foreign origin, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Khafājī (d. 1658) confirms the importance of discovering these words to serve the field of etymology/morphology (*al-ʿišhtiqāq*) and semantics (*al-mʿāni*):

أعلم أنّ العرب تكلمت بشئ من الأعجمي والصحيح منه ما وقع في القرآن أو الحديث أو الشعر القديم أو كلام من يوثق بعربيته، ولا يصح الاشتقاق فيه لأنه لا يدعي أخذه من مادة الكلام العربي، وهو كاذب لأن الطير ولدت الحوت، فما وقع في بعض التفاسير أنّ إبليس مأخوذ من الأبلّاس ونحوه ممّا عند خطأ.

You should know that the Arabs spoke with some [words] from foreign languages. The words that are more confirmed are the ones that exist in the Qurʿān, Hadith and old poetry or in the speech of one whose Arabic skills are trusted. [These foreign words] cannot be used to produce derivations and cannot be claimed that their roots originated in Arabic speech. [Whoever says that is] like claiming that the birds gave birth to a whale, [exactly like] what happened in some Qurʿānic commentaries saying that the devil’s name Iblīs is derived from Al-ʿblās [meaning simultaneous failure and sadness]. All such [weak hypotheses] are considered wrong. (al-Khafājī 1865, 3)

Scholars have begun to pay serious attention recently to several Arabic manuscripts that show how premodern Arab scholars were concerned with studying and preserving the ancient heritage of Egypt (Stephan 2017; Cooperson 2010; Dykstra 1994; Haarmann 1996). For example, the thirteenth-century historian Abū Jaʿfar Al-ʿīdrīsī (d. 1251) authored a serious study of the pyramids. He even repeated visits to clarify and re-examine his previous observations under different hypotheses:

In detail, method, and analysis, it far exceeds anything written on the subject by the classical writers or by subsequent scholars until centuries later. Beginning with a statement about the importance of studying the pyramids, al-Idrisi provided descriptions of location, size, measurement, and even an analysis of the mineral content of the stones. He also included a comprehensive survey of previous pertinent literature. (Thompson 2015, 47)

Okasha El-Daly’s (2007) research shows that several other Arabic commentaries detail a wide variety of available sources, giving information about, and respect to, the AE monuments. El-Daly explains this interest by medieval Arabic scholars in Egypt’s past as a religious order from God to Muslims in general. He refers to a Qurʿānic verse in which God asks His prophet to advise the good Muslims to travel through different countries and nations in order to understand and appreciate the ancient wonders He has created:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ

[O Muhammed] Say [to the unbelievers]: walk on the earth, and see how He started the creation (Qur'ān 29: 20)

El-Daly argues that this Qur'ānic verse was the primary incentive that protected these ancient monuments until now from the conservative Muslim groups who adopt conservative ideology against the pre-Islamic civilizations (El-Daly 2007, 18).

### **Arabic egyptology through eurocentrism and colonialism**

It is clear that the harmful Arabocentric treatments that devalue the rich history of ancient Middle Eastern languages have negatively affected the growth of the Arabic school of Egyptology in terms of AE linguistic and literary studies. These Arabocentric treatments took advantage of the absence of solid studies produced in Arabic about the AE language and its literature (or even comparative – historical linguistics in general). This fragmentation and loss of direction are undoubtedly related to knowledge production and circulation, which is always confined by questions of trust and to whom this knowledge is available. However, by seeing the problem through this monocular perspective that denies the appreciation of modern and medieval Egyptians' interest in their ancient past, the Eurocentric hegemony paves the way for its claim to the full rights of knowledge and hence kinship (Mekawy 2020, 72). This Eurocentric viewpoint has had a more severe impact; namely, that of denying continuity between ancient Egypt, Christian Egypt (Naguib 2008, 1–4), Medieval Islamic Egypt, and the present-day Egyptians (Whitehouse 1995, 15).

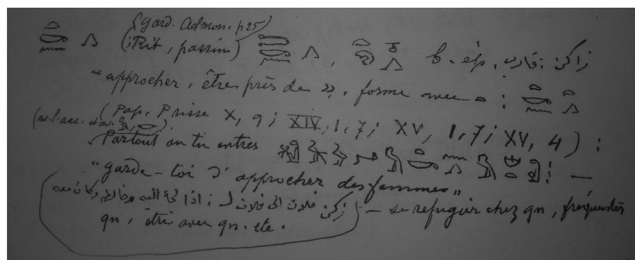
No one can deny the role of nineteenth-century imperialism in creating the discipline of Egyptology. It was Europeans who pressed the Egyptians to found an antiquities service in 1858 and to open a museum in 1863 (Reid 1985, 234). However, the French monopolized the leading positions in these institutions for ninety-four years. They worked together with the British to exclude Egyptians from working in the field of archaeology and to avoid teaching many Egyptians the AE language for political reasons, as they wanted to prevent awakening pride in their ancient glory and thus encouraging demands for independence (Quirke 2013, 381). This continuous struggle may point to a massive gap in the scholarly study of the AE language, a controversial issue for the general stance of Euro-American academics, which is hiding a universe of complexity behind the neglect of modern Arabic-Egypt in the Egyptology field, as Christian Langer argues:

Modern Egyptology was an academic discipline conceived by Europeans for Europeans. Europe had appropriated Egypt's ancient heritage. Egyptian Egyptologists

played virtually no role until the emergence of Egyptian nationalism and eventual formal independence from British domination in the 1920s. They were discouraged from pursuing the exploration of their own ancient heritage both by Islamic tradition and the Western archaeological or rather colonial agenda and usually relegated to the role of anonymous archaeological labourers. (Langer 2017, 185)

It seems that for political and ideological reasons, early Egyptian Egyptologists never received constructive encouragement from Euro-American scholars to develop comparisons between the AE and Arabic languages. Any rediscovered association between the two languages was automatically considered ahistorical or unscientific by early Eurocentric Egyptologists, mostly French. The struggles of the first Egyptian Egyptologist Aḥmad Kamāl Bāshā (1851–1923) stand as clear proof for such roots of Eurocentric hegemony (Reid 1985, 239). Kamāl faced several obstacles to publishing his AE – French – Arabic dictionary, mainly because of the Arabic cognates that he insisted on employing in order to attract modern Egyptians to study the AE language, instead of being captured by the religious stories about the tyrant Pharaoh of Moses. Kamāl’s twenty-two volumes were published in 2002 without any update or revisions to document the scholarship of his time. In this dictionary, he usually explains the meaning of the AE words through their own textual context, and in many cases he offers Coptic, Arabic, and sometimes Hebrew equivalents. For example, in the example in figure 1, Kamāl points out the similar meanings of two vocal forms: the Arabic *rakana* رَكَنَ (“to go to someone asking for support”) and the AE  $\tau\kappa\eta$  *tkn* (“be near, approach, draw near, border (on)”; *tkn* can also be used in a plural noun  $\tau\kappa\eta\omega$  *tknw*, meaning “neighbours”).

During this time, the German Egyptologist Adolf Erman (1854–1937) had the full support of the Berlin – Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities to collaborate with more than eighty Egyptologists around the world to create a comprehensive dictionary of the AE language. They began working on the dictionary in 1897, and thirteen volumes were published in 1926. In the dictionary, the German lexicographers made sure to include a list of



cognates from shared roots between AE and Coptic, Arabic, Hebrew, and Mesopotamian languages to open the philological scholarship in this field, as highlighted in figures 2 and 3.

تم	vollständig sein	تم	einschneiden š'd	IV 422	تمساح	Krokodil msh	II 136	
تم(m)	V 303	شوط	Stadtname: šš-ḥtp	IV 412	تمسك	Haut msk	II 150	
جنح	Flügel ḏnh	V 577	شفخ	IV 99	مغارة	Höhle mgrt	II 164	
جص	Gips ḥḏ	V 82	اشبع	V 562	موت	sterben mt, mwt	II 165	
خيس	umbinden ḥbs	III 64	طبل	V 262	نجار	Zimmermann ndr	II 382	
حسب	rechnen ḥsb	III 166	اطفح	Stadtname: Atfih tp-ih.w I 120; V 281	نعى	den Tod bekannt- geben n'	II 207	
حفل	große Menge ḥfn	III 74	طفل	zart sein; Kind tfn	V 299	نكح, ناك	heiraten nk	II 345
خمس	salzig ḥmṣ.t	III 93	عداوة	Feindschaft dt	I 237	وزن	wägen wdn	I 890
خر	fallen ḥr	III 319						

Figure 2. AE with Arabic (Erman and Grapow 1926–1931, vol. 6, 242).

אסיר	Gefangener itr	I 151	חפה	verhüllen ḥṣp	III 30	מגדל	Turm mktr	II 164
אצבע	Finger ḏb'	V 562	חמו	zittern ḥfḏ	III 75	מהר	ungestüm sein mhr	II 116
ארי	Löwe ir	I 106	חרב	Schwert ḥrp	III 149	מוט	Tragestange mṣwḏ	II 28
אשל	Tamariske isr	I 130	תרטם	(?) Art Priester ḥrj-ḥb	III 395	איתמול	? längst mr	II 108
אשקה	Köcher isṣp.t	I 132	חשכל	ein Metall ḥṣmn	III 163	מות	sterben mt (mwt)	II 165
ב	Präp. m	II 1	חשב	rechnen ḥsb	III 166	מחיר	? Kaufpreis mḥr	II 132
בזן	Wachturm ḥbn	I 471	חתי	Hethiter ḥtṣ, ḥt	III 349	מה, מי	wer, was m	II 4
בבא	Terebinthe bkj	I 482	טבעת	Siegel(ring) ḏb'.t	V 566	מים	Wasser mw (mjw)	II 50
בעל	Baal b'r	I 447	מנא	Korb dnj.t	V 467	מכר	verkaufen mkr	II 163
ברך	beten brk	I 466	יאר	Fluß itrw	I 146	מלקוח	Beute mrḳḥt	II 113
ברכה	Geschenk (Gottes)	I 466	יבל	Strom jbr	I 63	מנה	Mine (als Gold- gewicht) mn	II 82
ברכה	Teich brkt	I 466	יודע	klug jd	I 153			
ברק	glänzen brḳ	I 466	ים	Meer jm	I 78			
בבל	Bvblus kbn	V 118	יבק	saugen šnk	IV 174			

Figure 3. AE with Hebrew (Erman and Grapow 1926–1931, vol. 6, 243).

In every public event dedicated to young Egyptians, Aḥmad Kamāl made sure to connect both modern and ancient Egypt by comparing the similar features of both ancient Egyptian and Arabic languages. In 1914, the year of his retirement from the Antiquities Service which was fully controlled by the French, Kamāl explained in a public lecture to the young teachers at the Egyptian teachers' college how these comparative studies can inform us about the vivid exchanges between ancient cultures and the historical context of the Arabic language. His findings also indirectly challenge the claims of conservative Muslims that ascribe the creation of the Arabic language to a supernatural power in heaven:

إعلموا أيها السادة أن كثرة مطالعتي في اللغة المصرية القديمة منذ كنت في الثامنة عشر من عمري إلى أن بلغ الستين مهدت لي سبيل الوصول إلى إكتشاف غريب مفيد: ألا وهو أن اللغة العربية واللغة المصرية القديمة من أصل واحد ... إن لم تكونا لغة واحدة افترقتا بما دخلهما من القلب والإبدال كما حصل في كل اللغات القديمة. وكنت قبل الآن أدرس اللغة المصرية على الأسلوب الذي تلقينته من أستاذي هنري باشا بركش في مدرسة خاصة على نفقة الحكومة ولبثت مقتفيا منهج كغيري من الأثريين إلى قبل الآن بثماني سنوات. وفي أثناء ذلك كنت أرى للألفاظ العربية مثيلا في اللغة المصرية القديمة وكنت أدونها شيئا فشيئا حتى كثرت .

Oh, gentlemen, you should learn that my lengthy perusing of the AE language, since I was eighteen years old until I reached the age of sixty, paved the way to reach a strange and useful discovery, namely that both Arabic and the AE language are of one origin ... if they were not one language, and they have been separated because of the interventions of reversing and exchanging [the letters of their shared words] as happened in all the ancient languages. Before today I was studying the AE language following the method that I was taught by Professor Henry Bāshā Bruksch [Heinrich Brugsch, 1827–1894] in a special school that was funded by the [Egyptian] government, and I kept tracing his methodology, as many archaeologists did, until eight years from now. During this time, I was always seeing that Arabic vocal forms (*al-fāz*) have equivalents in the AE language, and I was recording them gradually until they became a lot. (Said 2002, 86)

Kamāl's dictionary was a result of his direct engagement with various AE texts, and he was eager to transfer his profound knowledge to successive generations of Egyptian Egyptologists. Before finishing this dictionary, Kamāl even authored a book about the grammar of the AE language which was published in 1886 (figure 4).

Kamāl made sure to extract his grammatical examples directly from various AE sources. He even offered a full translation of the AE story of the doomed prince, which belongs to the 18th dynasty (about 1450 BC), as a reading exercise (*tamrīn qirā`ah*) to train the Egyptian scholars on how to extract grammatical rules directly from AE literary texts (Kamāl 1886 1886, 185–202). His translation of this AE story is still the only one that has been translated into Arabic directly from its source. The book also contained four hieroglyphic transcriptions of limestone stela that belong to different eras, with the aim of teaching students how to engage with the texts inscribed on AE monuments (figure 5).

Kamāl considered Egyptian students to be the central focus for his writings, and he was eager to give them all the available tools to translate the various dimensions of the AE language and to be better equipped to start the Arabic scientific contribution in the field of AE scholarship. He declared such intentions in the short introduction to his grammar book:

ولما كانت هذه الاجروميات باللغة الاوروبوية ومرتبة بترتيبهم الاجنبية احببت ان اعمل اجرومية باللغة العربية ليسهل لابناء وطني تناولها ويخف على السنتهم في هذه اللغة تداولها سالكا طريق النحاة في بعض تراكيبيهم وما قصدوه في تبويب ابوابهم مذيلا اخرها بمختصر لطيف ومجموع كلمات ظريف وجعلته كالفاموس في المراجعة

ليستفيد الطالب ما غاب عنه في المطالعة وختمتها بخاتمة بينت فيها طرق اقلامهم وتنوع كتابتهم ورسومهم وسميتها الفرائد البهية في قواعد الهيروغليفية اجابة لما امرني به العالم الشهير ذو العقل الوافر الغزير جناب جاستون ماسيرو مدير الاثار التاريخية والانتيقة خانة المصرية.

Since these [AE] grammar references were written in European languages and were designed according to their foreign arrangements, I yearned to make a grammar book [for the AE language] written in Arabic, so that it would become easier for the sons of my nation to handle the [AE] grammatical nature/constructions and for its language to become light on their tongues when they handle it. I employed the methodology of [Arabic] grammarians in [arranging] some grammatical constructions following the division of their chapters. I ended the book with an elegant summary and amusing collections of words, which I made like a dictionary for the student's benefit when revising whatever he missed during his perusal. I concluded the grammar book with a conclusion in which I highlighted the styles of their pens and the variety in their writings and drawings. I called the book "The unique jewels in the fundamentals of hieroglyphs" (*al-farā'id al-bahīah fī qaūā'id al-hīrūghlīfīah*) to fulfil the order of the famous scientist, the one who has a bountiful and abundant mind, Monsieur Gaston Maspero, the director of historical antiquities and the Egyptian Museum (*antīqah-khānah*). (Kamāl 1886, 3)

Unfortunately, Kamāl's grammar book was overlooked by his successive peers for unknown reasons. Kamāl worked hard against all the direct and indirect restrictions to establish a good foundation for Egyptian students in Arabic. Twice he even established a school to teach Egyptian students the basics of archaeology and the AE language, but his efforts were thwarted by a colonial agenda that had nothing to do with limited funding, as Quirke argues:

Despite the French directorate, until British occupation took hold, Egyptians were beginning to enter the archaeological domain. In February 1882, during the short-lived nationalist government of Urabi, Ahmad Kamāl was able to open a boarding-school of five pupils, with a budget of E (denoting Egyptian pounds) 500. For E 8 a month as director, Kamāl taught Arabic, arithmetic, and geography. In April 1882, the Minister for Public Works aimed to expand with a further ten students, including four "from among the children of the notables of the Coptic sect". However, after the occupation, in 1885 Maspero could only find funds to employ the graduates by closing the school and taking its budget. (Quirke 2013, 394–395)

There is a clear gap between Aḥmad Kamāl's enthusiasm and creative approach to teaching and the successive generations of Egyptian Egyptologists in terms of teaching the AE language and its literature in Arabic. Few Egyptian Egyptologists seem to have achieved forward steps in the various

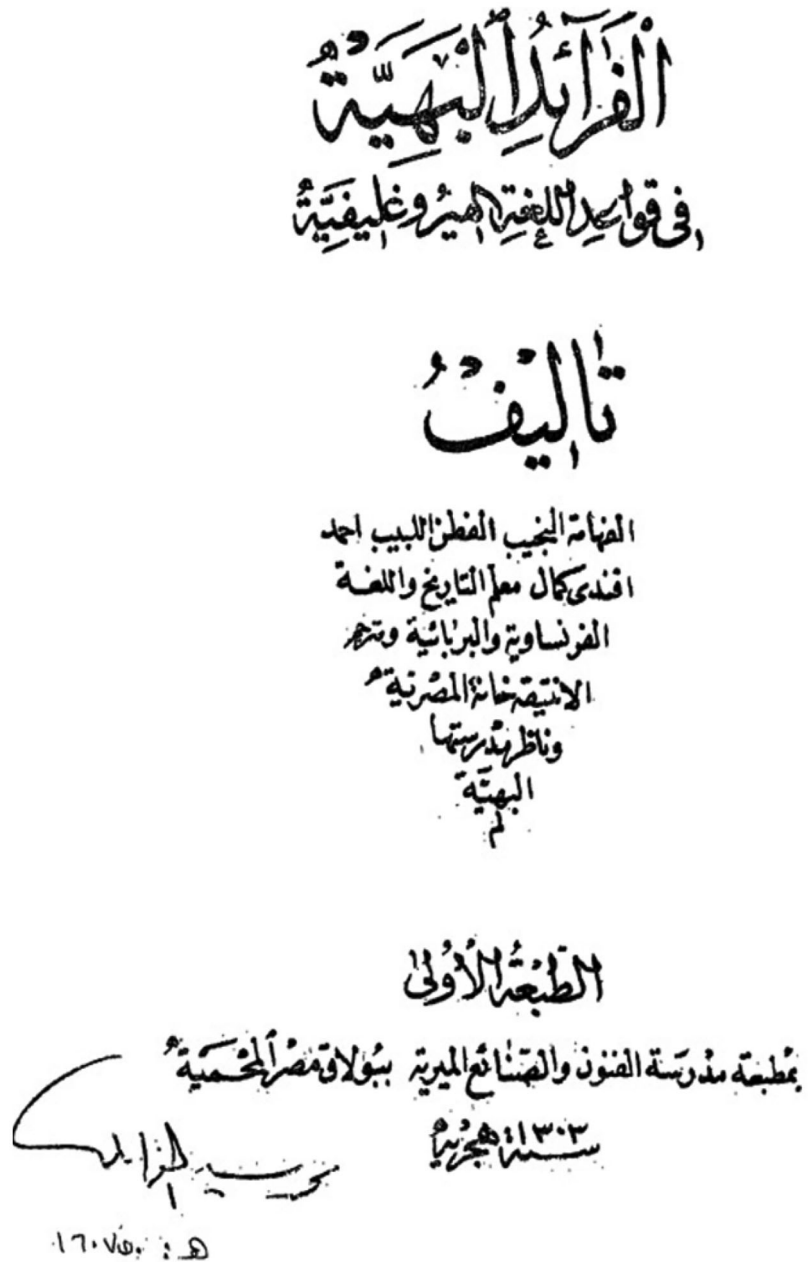
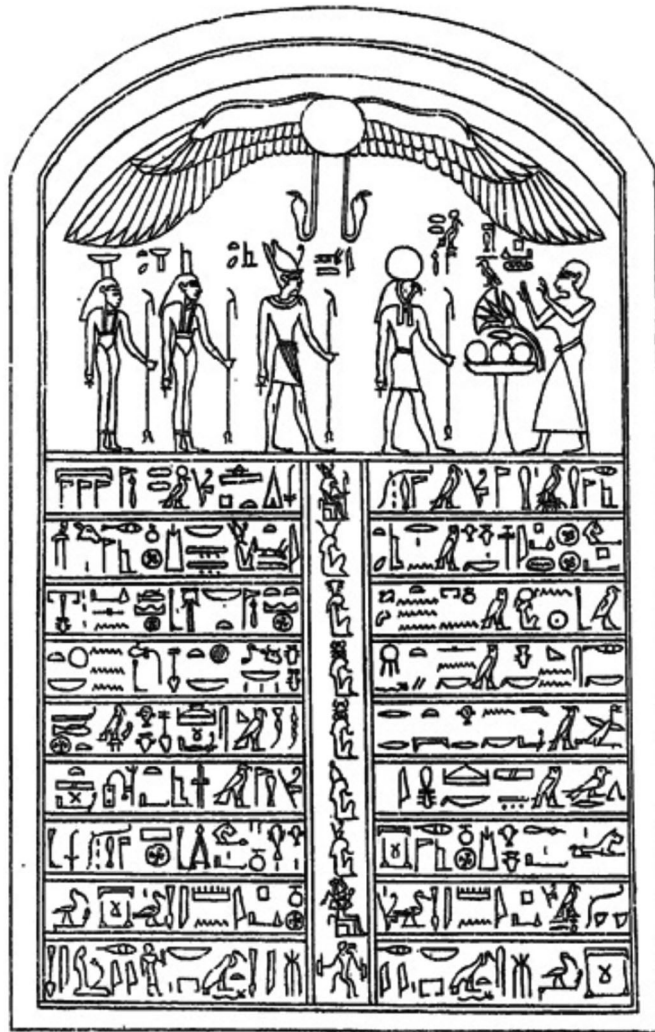


Figure 4. The title page of the first AE grammar book in Arabic.

fields of AE language and literature. In the introduction to his AE grammar book, written in English, 'Abd el-Mohsen Bakir appears to acknowledge the Eurocentric misrepresentation of the AE language:





مشهد لطيف من الحجر الجيري مموح بالذهب ارتفاعه ٥٣ سم وعرضه ٣٥ سم وجد بالحصانية وهي  
 قرية بالصعيد وعليه اسم يدوا من عهد الملك ابن رجب يدعى خرمع نحو ١٥ كم من زوجته  
 أري الملك ويشاهد في على المشهد صاحب الاثر بتفريع المعبودات وفي اسفله توسل لبعض  
 المعبودات مقسم الى قسمين بينهما صور لبعض المعبودات أيضا

Figure 5. Transcriptions of hieroglyphs (Kamāl 1886, 203).

It is clear to me and to others that the standard grammars and dictionaries of Ancient Egyptian have uprooted the Egyptian language from its Semitic family and its manner of thinking, and transplanted it on to a foreign ground, then,

unobtrusively, have subjected it to the entirely different perspective of the Indo-Europeans. (Bakir 1984, ii)

However, Bakir did not offer any significant comparative linguistic contribution which could pave the way to repair the weak points of Eurocentric methodologies. His grammatical study did not even help him to offer any translations of AE literature into Arabic. Nor did he encourage his indigenous colleagues to take a different direction and establish their own school, instead of following the Eurocentric methodology: “Bakir’s intellectual debts are entirely Western. Moreover, he made no claim to replace the standard grammars of Gardiner, Erman, Lefebvre, and De Buck” (Reid 1985, 245). Postcolonial criticism highlighted the negative impacts of such practices which adopt or adapt Eurocentric methodologies instead of offering an alternative strategy of intellectual decolonization. The empty laments of those indigenous scholars carry no recognized hope of change, as Leon Moosavi argues: “In such instances, the very colonial hierarchies that those who pursue intellectual decolonisation lament are reproduced to the extent that there is a ‘decolonisation without decolonising’” (Moosavi 2020, 334).

In sum, there is no indigenous Egyptological approach that has been developed in print alongside the foreign national strategies.<sup>5</sup> Many Western historians, therefore, acknowledge that for almost two centuries the study of ancient Egypt in the Western world has been shaped by a Eurocentric and racist disposition (Young 1995, 118). Modern Egyptians can be regarded as an influential group excluded by traditional Egyptology (O’Connor and Reid 2003, 4). Egyptology and modern Western imperialism grew up together hand in hand. European scholars created Egyptology as an academic discipline, and they kept watering its branches of knowledge until they considered this ancient African culture to be a part of their own Eurocentric world heritage. Donald Reid, like many other historians, observes that Euro-American scholars of Egyptology adopted ancient Egyptians as their own distant ancestors and displayed themselves as triumphantly moderating the globe by their Eurocentric domination of its knowledge production:

The term Egyptology itself would never have been coined by Egyptians. Its illogical limitation to the study of ancient Egypt implies Western denigration of Coptic and Islamic Egypt. Ancient Egyptians became “honorary Westerners” on the onward and upward track that was presumed to culminate in the contemporary West. This world view remains entrenched in many Western civilisation and “world history” courses in the United States. Modern Egyptians could not leave such an interpretation unchallenged once they began to re-establish their own links with their severed pharaonic past. (Reid 1985, 243)

It seems evident that this Eurocentric struggle is not restricted to the discipline of Egyptology but also surrounds other African archaeological studies, as Bassey Andah argues:

At present, Western scholars are very much in control of African archaeology, as they control all other fields of African studies, largely as an outcome of Africa's recent colonial experience. For about 200 years, the West has controlled both African affairs and African studies. The "experts" in African affairs and the various fields of history, anthropology, and other social sciences are Europeans. The sources students are expected to consult – museum collections, libraries, archives, and so forth – are also overwhelmingly European. In sum, the documented history of Africa is found in sources that are European, not African. (Andah 1995, 149)

That is why several scholars called for freeing African studies from the adverse effects of the European hegemony. For example, we find Peter Schmidt asking for the liberation of "the historical knowledge in Africa from the paradigmatic constraints of European historiography and the colonial library" (Schmidt 1995, 119). He argues that there are many positive results of this liberation for European scholarship itself, as it will work to develop new avenues of inquiry, new sources of historical evidence, and new theoretical perspectives.

To answer the question as to why those few Egyptians could not offer any recognizable effort in the area of the AE language, we should take a look at how Euro-American Egyptology constructed the field by loosely using Greco-Roman terms and concepts to describe every detail of this non-European language. This long-established Eurocentric situation is not just related to the AE grammar field. The Western literary treatments of AE texts seem inescapably trapped in the European spirit, imposed unwittingly on the ancient written sources, and tending to lose sight of the unique character of the Egyptian language and its literature as part of the Afro-Asiatic phylum. Richard Parkinson declared that the outcomes of modern AE literary studies are still limited by European academic difficulties and have not yet become a real part of the common practice in the field of literary criticism, as early Egyptologists once hoped (Parkinson 1997b, 4). Several Egyptologists confirmed the different nature of the AE literary taste from the Euro-American; however, they could not develop the tools that would enable the modern receiver to understand better and appreciate such differences (Rashwan 2021a, 24–34). Their attitude is well illustrated by Gardiner's impression of AE literature. Gardiner judged the different nature of the AE literary language by wearing his own Eurocentric glasses, in a way that simply shows how imposing modern Eurocentric preconceptions can lend itself to an increasing misrepresentation and misinterpretation of AE poetics:

.....

To sum up, what has survived to us from the literature of Early Egypt is but a small selection of fortuitous samples ... The study of other books of which we have but single copies, and which may therefore be conjectured to have enjoyed less celebrity, shows that the ancient taste differed from our own, and that possibly many works in which we could find real poetic beauty have been lost through lack of appreciation at the time they were written. The best characteristics of Egyptian literary art are its directness, its love of the picturesque, and its sense of humour; the worst defects are a leaning towards bombast, a monotony in the metaphors used, and a very limited range of sentiment. The impression with which we are left is that of a pleasure-loving people, gay, artistic, and sharp-witted, but lacking in depth of feeling and in idealism. (Gardiner 1957, 24c)

The Euro-American pioneers had the academic freedom to establish and develop the investigatory tools for the AE language, based on their modern European terms and their definitions (Rashwan 2020b, 348–351). Under these circumstances, AE literature was linked with a commitment to European literary – linguistic analytical tools, mainly for a dialogue with European readers, rather than hearing from the ancient Egyptian language itself, which could be achieved by using and comparing its linguistic and literary features with other kindred languages. In his anthology of AE literature, Stephen Quirke addresses the question of Arabic linguistic affinities with ancient Egyptian and explains how such interaction with the Arabic literary tradition could be useful for both AE literary analysis and for challenging Eurocentrism in the field of Egyptology as a whole. He encourages Euro-American scholars to give the Arabic literary world the same chance which they have offered to Eurocentric theories in their rereading of AE texts. He argues that such Eurocentric impositions of modernism will not fully resolve the problematic questions raised by premodern texts. Active engagement with Arabic literary criticism promises fresh perspectives that may challenge the self-contained approaches of contemporary theoretical readings of AE texts:

Despite the historically relatively late date, and the geographically and culturally distinct homeland, classical Arabic literature and literary criticism offer a point of new departure, to check Eurocentric assumptions and rethink categories. The Arab world and especially modern Egyptian access to this literature can claim to be not only different, but linguistically and geographically closer than Western European reception can be: Arabic reception does not render the European contribution void, but it does promise to refresh perspectives on ancient literatures, and should encourage a greater degree of humility in Western Egyptological researches. (Quirke 2004, 28)

**Reversed *jinās* (القلب – العكس-المخالف )**

As a concrete illustration of this fruitful engagement with the premodern Arabic literary tradition, one may consider rediscovering the types of AE wordart based on an understanding of Arabic *jinās*. Etymologically, *jinās* is a loanword derived from the Greek/Latin root γένος-genus-genos, which means race, type, gender, or descent. It has been transferred to the Arabic language via the Syriac word *gensā* (Edzard 1998, 36). The word *jins* (جنس) does not occur in the Qur’ān, and the root j-n-s is not found there either. Neither of these is used in pre-Islamic or early Arabic poetry, nor in the major canonical Hadith compilations of the Prophet. However, the concept of *jinās* in Arabic *balāghah* is fully Arabic and is more related to the literary nature of the Arabic language.

Arabic *balāghah* (literally eloquence and roughly translated as poetics) covers hundreds of literary devices. For my investigation, I selected for a case study the literary device *jinās*. *Jinās* has no equivalent in English because of its unique character, but has been roughly translated as paronomasia, pun, wordplay, or quibble. The Euro-American scholarship lacks a comprehensive and consistent taxonomy for all the devices labeled as ‘puns’ or ‘word-plays’ (Noegel 2021, 15-25) For the sake of brevity, I will discuss only one type of *jinās* in both Arabic and AE languages to demonstrate how shared linguistic affinities can enrich our literary understanding of the kindred languages (Rashwan 2021b, 25). Let us explore one of the most innovative types of *jinās* in both Arabic and ancient Egyptian poetics: reversed *jinās*. This term refers to two words with the same letters but in different arrangements. However, it is not always obligatory that all the letters of the word be in reverse order. It can be attested in both Arabic prose and poetry.

The Persian literary critic Rashīd al-Dīn Waṭwāṭ (d. 1182) considers this reversed *jinās* craft as one of the most evident signs of high eloquence in a literary text, only if the writer used it reasonably without sacrificing the cohesion of the textual context (Al-Waṭwāṭ 2009, 107). It is misleading to follow the first impression about the function of reversed *jinās* as only serving a vocal purpose that contributes to the musical harmony of the sentence, rather than producing semantic connotations between the *jinās* words in the reader’s mind. Most of the studied instances in both Arabic and AE languages reveal that there is an implied semantic relation that connects the reversed *jinās* words, as will be shown in the examples.

The reversed *jinās* words can be antonyms, or synonyms, or have cause and effect relationships, or simply have analogous values and comparable semantics. Many of the case studies of reversed *jinās* seem to show that a gifted writer is using *jinās* and other literary devices to focus the reader’s attention and to encourage them to explore what is similar and what is different between the meanings of the two words in a reversed arrangement. Particularly



[The god Ra-Hor-Akhty] the one who arises in gold, who illuminates the Two Lands with the rays of his two eyes. (Sethe 1909, Urk. IV, 937, Tomb-chapel of Iamunedjeh in Qurna, Theban Tomb 84)

In the above example, full reversed *jinās* is represented by the two words – sDm.f verb meaning “to rise”, “shine”, “appear”, “overflow or be excessive”, and transliterated as wbn – and secondly – a noun meaning “gold” and transliterated as nbw. Both words have the same kind and number of letters but in reversed order. The meanings of the two *jinās* words are dominated by the colour of both: golden yellow.<sup>8</sup>

First <i>jinās</i> word	Second <i>jinās</i> word	<i>jinās</i> words
wbn	nbw	



xpr Aw Hr m Hwa ib m wA n ntt n iit m Haw n ntt n xprr

The one who was happy [literally, with a joyful face] became like the one with grieved heart, do not scheme for something which has not come yet, do not rejoice for something which did not happen yet. (Parkinson 1991, 38, lines 302–303)

In the above example from *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, full reversed *jinās* is represented by the two contrasted words – an adjective transliterated as Aw meaning “aroused emotionally from happiness”, but when combined with “face” gives the meaning “with a joyful face” – and – a verb meaning “to form a long-term plan” or “scheme or brood (on)” and transliterated as wA. Both words are in reversed order.

Also in the above example, partial reversed *jinās* is represented by the two contrasted words – an adjective transliterated as Hwa and meaning “sad”, but when combined with “the heart” means “apprehensive” – and – an adjectival verb meaning “to rejoice” and transliterated as Haw. The last two letters of both words are in reversed order, wa – aw, while they share the same beginning letter H.

This second reversed *jinās* example shows that the mind’s eye of the ancient reader would have indulged in pondering the various semantic correspondences criss-crossing between the partial reversed *jinās* (Hwa – Haw) and the full reversed one (Aw and wA). The reader will easily notice that the two forms are semantically antonyms. Moreover, the framing morphological *jinās* that also occurs between xpr (meaning “to happen or become”) and n xprr (meaning “did not happen”) seems to complement the two different types of reversed *jinās* employed in this sentence.

First <i>jinās</i> word	Second <i>jinās</i> word	Reversed letters	<i>jinās</i> words
راقب - Hwa راقب Aw	راقب - Haw راقب wA	wa - aw Aw - wA	راقب - راقب راقب - راقب

### Partial reversed *jinās* (مقلوب البعض)

In partial reversed *jinās*, the letters of two *jinās* words are not entirely reversed, only some of them, such as: (a) the two Arabic words رقيب (meaning “watchman”, “observer”, “censor”, or “sentry”) and قريب (meaning “akin” or “nearby”); and (b) the two Arabic words شاعر (meaning “poet”, “aware of”, or “sensing”) and شارع (meaning “street” or “lawgiver”). In the first example (راقب - قريب) the last two letters are identical and in the same order, while the first two letters are reversed. In the second example (شارع - شاعر) the opposite is the case as the first two letters are in the same order while the last two are reversed.

اللهم اسر عوراتي وأمن روعاتي

O God, may you cover my flaws and safeguard my internal fears. (Al-Bābrī 1983, 671)

In this *ḥadīth*, partial reversed *jinās* is represented by the two similar words a plural noun meaning “my flaw”, “my imperfection”, or “my weak-ness”) عوراتي (a plural noun meaning “my internal fears”). Both words are in a plural form and are attached to a suffix that expresses a first-person possessive pronoun (ي). The reversed *jinās* is better shown in the singular forms of both (روعة - عورة).

من يُحرم يُزخم, ومن يُجزم يُزخم

Whoever practises the ritual [consecration of the Maccah pilgrim], he will be forgiven [by God], and whoever commits sins there, he will be stoned [in Hell]. (Al-Waṭwāt 2009, 108)

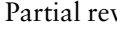

Partial reversed *jinās* is represented in the above by the two sets of passive verbs يُزخم (a verb meaning “entering the holy place of Maccah”) and يُجزم (a verb meaning “forgiving” or “being merciful”). Both *jinās* words (يُجزم - يُزخم) have the first and last letters in the same place, while the middle two letters are in reversed order. The same situation occurs for the second reversed *jinās* play in the above (يُجزم - يُزخم).



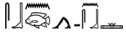
يُجزم - يُزخم  
يُجزم - يُزخم



imi in.tw n.i HAt.f mAi pHfy mAi Hr-ib.f m?  
 nty m **sb**n n mryt ir tkn nb Hr.f **snb** ib Hr.f

Let someone bring to me one whose front is a lion and his back is a lion and his middle like ... That which is gliding towards the riverbank, if anyone steers upon it, the heart will be healthy because of it.<sup>9</sup> (Parkinson 1997a, 64; verse on the verso under the text of Khakheperreseneb)

Partial reversed *jinās* is represented above by the two words  (an infinitive meaning “glide away [of snakes]”, “steer off course” or “diverge”, and transliterated as sbn) and  (an adjectival verb meaning “to be healthy” and transliterated as snb). Both words begin with the same letters, while the two following letters are in reversed order.

First <i>jinās</i> word  -sbn	Second <i>jinās</i> word  -snb	<i>jinās</i> words 
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

### Echo reversed *jinās*

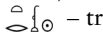
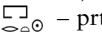
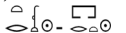
I generated this term to refer to repeating reversed letters with an additional letter in one of the *jinās* words, a type that seems more applicable to the AE language than to Arabic. For example:



isw qaH pw Sm Sw r tr n prt

Indeed, he (the king) is the corner that the sunlight warms during the time of winter. (Collier and Quirke 2004; hymns to Senwosret III, third stanza, line 8)

Echo reversed *jinās* is represented by the two words  (a noun meaning “time” or “season” and transliterated as tr) and  (a noun meaning “the month of prt [winter]” and transliterated as prt). Both words have the two letters (r and t) but in reverse order (tr – rt), with an additional letter at the beginning of the second *jinās* word (p).

First <i>jinās</i> word  – tr	Second <i>jinās</i> word  – prt	Reversed letters tr – rt	<i>jinās</i> words 
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pXr Snw n tA m km n iAt

[Ramses II is a wolf] which circles the circuit of the land in the completion of a second. (Abu Simbel Ramses II C20 poem; Rashwan 2020a, 137, line 16)

Echo reversed *jinās* is represented above by the two words  $\overline{\text{tA}}$  (a noun meaning “land” and transliterated as tA) and  $\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{iAt}$  (a noun meaning “moment”, “instant”, or “very short time in general”, and transliterated as iAt). The eulogist of Ramses II stresses the time importance by the ending, a soundless determinative of the sun:  $\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{ḥ}^{\circ}$ .<sup>10</sup>

First <i>jinās</i> word	Second <i>jinās</i> word	Reversed letters	<i>jinās</i> words
$\overline{\text{tA}}$	$\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{iAt}$	tA – iAt	$\overline{\text{tA}}.\text{ḥ}^{\circ}\text{ḥ}^{\circ}$

## Conclusion

The application of the Arabic concept of *jinās* served to unite “vocal form” and “poetic content”, which is an essential feature of the literariness of the AE language. The premodern Arabic poetics approach can liberate the literary devices that are based on repetition from the modern Eurocentric negative reception of ‘pun’ as part of humor that provoke laughter. Arabic *balāghah* offers a solution to comprehension by connecting literary devices to the notion of literariness. In order to detect the degree of literariness, the modern reader’s eye has to be familiar with the various forms of the literary devices used. In other words, if we could have a clear understanding of those literary devices, we would better understand the type of literary language used in every AE text, and appreciate the literary talent of every gifted writer (Rashwan 2020c). Based on the AE – Arabic examples of reversed *jinās*, it is clear that the AE literary meaning is a servant of an innovative vocal form.

Cross-linguistic comparisons provide strong support for arguments on literary textual practices that avoid Eurocentric rhetorical misperceptions and misrepresentation. The AE literary devices cannot be fully understood or analysed in isolation from their kindred languages in the Afro-Asiatic phylum. There is a broad linguistic consensus about the groupings of African languages, following the arguments of Joseph Greenberg (1971) and based on sufficient facts which have been readily available for many years

(Blench 2006), proving the close linguistic relationship of AE to the African and Semitic languages. These linguistic affinities have been created and developed for centuries as a result of their geographical and historical engagement with each other. Greenberg made it clear that these uncovered similarities are a demonstrable consequence of a lost historical contact:

Languages should never be compared in isolation if closer relatives are at hand. For the tendency of those particular forms in a language which resembles another language or group of languages to reappear with considerable frequency in more closely related forms of speech is a valuable index of the existence of a real historical connection. (Greenberg 1971, 22–23)

I argue that Greenberg’s statement – which asks linguists to acknowledge the importance of comparing kindred languages with each other to rediscover their shared linguistic history – can be applied for the benefits of comparative literary studies as well. When scholars employ the linguistic kinship between the AE and Arabic languages, they can better understand the literary tools that the AE writers used in their writings. The outcome can reflect the general literary taste of AE society and how they deployed their poetic talents to attract their audiences and their readers.

Comparative studies of AE language and Arabic poetics are systematically excluded and avoided by Euro-American scholars and institutions to such an extent that until 2022 there were very few scholars who had produced any significant contributions that rediscover the close linguistic relationship between Arabic and AE poetics. There are several Eurocentric scholars who are placed in powerful positions, with sufficient power to ensure that only their traditional type of knowledge is produced and heavily cited, thereby promoting Eurocentric methodologies and statements as the most authoritative accounts. Arabic comparisons can help AE texts speak for themselves without forcing the literary devices into a European frame explicitly designed for the European audience, who do not even know the Greco-Roman history of such literary terms and concepts, as Jean Winand argues:

The pioneers were first trained as classicists, which is hardly surprising for the 19th and the beginning of the twentieth century. So they were tempted to take over the terminology used in the grammatical tradition of Latin and Greek. We still retain a lot of terminological names that go back to this epoch. As we know, names are never neutral, especially in linguistics. With them comes a halo of meanings, of implications that can reveal themselves as terribly misleading. (Winand 2011, 177)

Each language of the European continent has its specific terms and concepts that can hardly be found in other cultures. There is a long-established confusion between the ancient Greek, Latin, and European terms (Rashwan

2020b). Therefore, it is an erroneous methodology to impose the conceptual world of these terms on non-European cultures (Haspelmath 2020, 356). Each non-European literary culture should be represented by its own terms and concepts. The comparison with premodern Arabic poetics can shed new light on several overlooked features in AE literature and its stylistics. Such methodology can pave the way for developing “fair comparisons” between kindred languages. The Arabic school of Egyptology can take advantage of this methodology to examine the knowledge produced in the Euro-American institutions while being fully aware of the elements rooted in Eurocentric scholarship. This comparative methodology offers an excellent chance for Arabic Egyptology to decolonize the long-established Eurocentric frame of the AE language and literary studies.

Traditional Euro-American Egyptologists would argue that “colonialism” expired a long time ago when the reign of military administration ended. Many of them will even claim to be dedicated to inclusivity, equality, and to questioning critically their knowledge production. Some of them can easily frame their work under the rubric of “decolonization”, while their methodologies still recycle the long-established tools of Eurocentrism, with its political agenda deployed against allowing the former colonies to advance their own scholarship. The colonial history of such Eurocentric schools prevents, directly and indirectly, the indigenous school of Egyptology from generating alternative methodologies of knowledge production. Leon Moosavi argued convincingly in discussing the negative consequences of the absent dialogue between the Euro-American and Global South scholars:

This is unfortunate because it means that an advanced and insightful body of literature which can assist us in the pursuit of intellectual decolonisation is often silenced. In such instances, the very colonial hierarchies that those who pursue intellectual decolonisation lament are reproduced to the extent that there is a “decolonisation without decolonising”. This realisation that those of us who self-identify as anti-racist and anti-colonial may actually enact “intellectual colonisation” is deeply disconcerting. (Moosavi 2020, 333–334)

Euro-American scholars of Egyptology must learn Arabic and Egyptian dialect to better communicate with their Egyptian colleagues and engage with the current challenges that modern Egypt faces to preserve the heritage of ancient, Greco-Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic Egypt. The long-established training of Euro-American schools of Egyptology must include the several historical phases of Egypt – including the Christian and Islamic – in order to decolonize the Eurocentric theoretical frame, which tends to categorize the people of one land (Egypt) into various nations according to the colonizer’s language. These empires did not eliminate the majority of its people who lived on this land and mixed with several African neighbors

(Manzo 2022). These racial categorizations have never been raised concerning the relationship between ancient and modern Greece, Italy, China, or India, for example. When the people of one land change their language and religion, it does not mean that a new race has been created. No one is pure ethnically but Eurocentric scholars should not deny the fact that modern Egypt encompasses the several lives of ancient and medieval Egypt, as Fayza Haikel argues in a book's preface that highlights the cognates between the colloquial Egyptian dialect and AE language:

With the advent of Islam and its sweeping expansions in the world, Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in 641 and the course of its history changed radically. People gradually converted to Islam, and the upper strata of the population started to learn Arabic, as they had learned Greek before, in the Hellenistic period, because it was the language of administration. Arabic was the language of Quran, but countries of the Muslim world that were not administrated by Arabs did not find it necessary to adopt their language. In Egypt, the shift to Islam was probably easier than the shift to a new language for, after all when the country was conquered by the Arabs in the seventh century, most Egyptians were religious people, believing in God and in the Beyond, even when their respective religions were not as rigorously monotheistic as Islam. (Fayza Haikel quoted in Yousuf 2003, vii)

By deploying literary and linguistic methodologies rooted in Arabic (the current tongue of modern Egypt) or African and Semitic languages (the linguistic and geographical spheres of ancient Egypt), scholars can actually challenge Eurocentric methodologies and change how Egyptology is experienced, researched, published, and taught. Modern Egyptian and African scholars will be able to overcome the entrenched exclusion practised by Eurocentric scholars who prevented their own universities and students from realizing the potential that intellectual decolonization can facilitate. This methodology may also help to gain more insights about anthropological and historical sources written and practised in Arabic-speaking Egypt. It can help answer anthropological questions about AE culture, instead of looking for answers in far-off Indian or Chinese cultures, deliberately distancing the long history of this African land from its people. Nicole Hansen argued convincingly that “the lack of Arabic skills among non-Egyptian Egyptologists limits their ability to gain insights into Egyptian culture and how the predominance of European languages in the field limits the contributions that Egyptian Egyptologists are able to make to the field” (Hansen 2008, 171). A good example of these benefits is rediscovering the cognates between the AE language and Arabic or modern Egyptian dialects, a topic that has recently attracted attention but received limited recognition and support (Osman 2021; Borg 2021), in comparison with the relationship between AE and North-West Semitic, for example (Lambdin 1953; Muchiki 1999).

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In his ground-breaking book titled *Decolonising the Mind*, the African-Kenyan scholar Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o argued convincingly that imposing Eurocentric knowledge production as the only way to learn about the history of the colonized nations has played a great role in eradicating the ability of indigenous scholars to participate actively in a knowledge construction that is culturally sensitive to the negative aspects of Eurocentrism. In other words, those “native elite” scholars, who had a chance to study Egyptology in Euro-American institutions, were mostly trained to absorb and mirror different types of Eurocentric methodologies without challenging them critically. Adopting these Eurocentric approaches was the only way offered to them to receive recognition and approval in Euro-American academia.

For a hundred years, Egyptian students who were offered “generous” scholarships from the Egyptian governments to do their PhD in Euro-American institutions were diverted (or surrendered to Eurocentric pressure) from studying the AE language and its literature from a comparative perspective with Arabic and other Semitic or African languages. I took two classes in AE Language and Literature from two Egyptian professors; one earned her PhD in Germany and the other in France. Both were specialists in AE archaeology, but they have contrasting views of the linguistic relationship between the AE and Arabic. The first promoted pro-Arabic engagement in teaching the AE language generally, but never published on this subject. The other saw the Arabic language as a completely different language that should not be compared with the AE language. He was always saying in class that we cannot consider the English language as a kindred language to Arabic simply because the British colonized Egypt and we use some English words in colloquial speech. In his view, the same argument should be applied to the Arabs who colonized Egypt and changed its tongue.

In the last century, those few “native elite” Egyptian scholars did not translate into Arabic any Euro-American primary sources on the AE language so that the knowledge could be shared with the indigenous scholars who tend to be more comfortable in reading and thinking in their native tongues. Because of this practice, Eurocentric knowledge production sustained dominance in both worlds in order to capture Egyptology in a colonial prison. Translating the “mother sources” of AE language and literature would certainly help indigenous scholars to decolonize the research and teaching tools of Eurocentric knowledge production. On the other hand, few Egyptian scholars in Arabic Egyptology have engaged with comparative topics. However, their contributions have been superficial because they didn’t acquire the right training in both classical Arabic and Ancient Egyptian philology, and they lack the critical thinking tools against harmful nativism which would enable their comparative methodologies to offer lucid contributions that deserve greater recognition in challenging Eurocentrism. In the Arab world(s), the cost of this ignorance is inescapable and can easily be recognized through the

repetitive demands to destroy the artefacts and monuments of ancient Middle Eastern civilizations. These calls are produced under the influence of conservative Islamic interpretations extracted from Wahhābi socio-political movements in the Islamic world.<sup>11</sup> These dismissive calls for destruction can easily find blind followers due to the absence of reliable references written in Arabic about the ancient languages of the Middle East, which in turn would pave the way for producing more accurate translations and interpretations of their ancient literary and religious texts. The calls for epistemic decolonization should not be confined to Eurocentric academia without acknowledging the harmful consequences of negative nationalism and nativism (defined generally as the practice of reviving an Indigenous culture against other identities). It is a common misbelief to think that the Bible or the Quran were codified to be considered historical resources; they were not designed to challenge or replace the modern methods of studying history. The Grand Mufti of Egypt and a central figure of the Arab Nahdah and Islamic modernization,<sup>12</sup> Muḥammad ‘Abduh (d.1905), argued that the several stories mentioned in the Quran should not be used to tell us about the history of ancient Middle Eastern societies. ‘Abduh highlighted the danger of employing the religious stories as ‘divine’ materials/foundation of historical research and writing:

ومن البديهي أن ذكر القصة في القرآن لا يقتضي أن يكون كل ما يحكى فيها عن الناس صحيحا، فذكر السحر في هذه الآيات لا يستلزم إثبات ما يعتقد الناس منه، ... بينما غير مرة أن القصص جاءت في القرآن لأجل الموعظة والاعتبار لا لبيان التاريخ ولا للحمل على الاعتقاد بجزئيات الأخبار عند الغابرين، وإنه ليحكى من عقائدهم الحق والباطل، ومن تقاليدهم الصادق والكاذب، ومن عاداتهم النافع والضار، لأجل الموعظة والاعتبار، فحكاية القرآن لا تعدو موضع العبرة ولا تتجاوز موطن الهداية، ولا بد أن يأتي في العبارة أو السياق وأسلوب النظم ما يدل على استحسان الحسن واستهجان القبيح. وقد يأتي في الحكاية بالتعبيرات المستعملة عند المخاطبين أو المحكي عنهم وإن لم تكن صحيحة في نفسها كقولهم” كما يقوم الذي يتخبطه الشيطان من المسد“[البقرة: 275] وكقولهم” بلغ مطلع الشمس[الكهف: 90] وهذا الأسلوب مألوف، فإننا نرى كثيرا من كتاب اللغة العربية وكتاب الإفرنج يذكرون آلهة الخير والشر في خطبهم ومقالاتهم ولا سيما في سياق كلامهم عن اليونان والمصريين القدماء، ولا يعتقد أحد منهم شيئا من تلك الخرافات الوثنية. ويقول أهل السواحل: غربت الشمس، أو سقط قرص الشمس في البحر أو في الماء، ولا يعتقدون ذلك وإنما يعبرون به عن المرئى

[It goes without saying that the presence of a story in the Qur’an does not imply that everything narrated about those people is correct [historically]. Mentioning magic in these verses does not necessarily involve [contemporary scholars] offering proof of how the people understood magic. ... We have explained several times that the Quranic stories were meant for exhortation and thoughtful examples. Therefore, these stories cannot be used to reveal historical events nor make us believe that we hold partial information about people from the ancient past. The Qur’an narrates some of those people’s beliefs to represent truth and falsehood; it narrates some of their traditions to represent truth-tellers and falsifiers; it narrates some of their customs to define what is beneficial and harmful. These examples were meant for exhortation and to give thought to the right path. The Qur’anic narrations are only meant for admonition and should not be considered more than

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showing the right way or manner of behaving. The [Qur'anic] expression or context always contains stylistic features that motivate the reader to like the good deeds and disapprove of the ugly acts. Sometimes, the Qur'anic narrative may contain expressions employed by the addressees or the people of whom it narrates. These expressions may not belong to reality; for example, the Qur'an says: he stands as the one whom Satan, by his touch, has driven to madness. (Q 2:275) or he reached the rising-place of the sun. (Q 18:90) This literary style is unexceptional. We see several Arab and foreign writers mention the gods of evil and goodness in their sermons and articles, especially when they speak of the Greek and ancient Egyptians. None of these writers believes in any of these thoughts belonging to polytheistic myths. When the people who live near the coast say that the sun has gone to the west, or the sun disc falls in the sea or the water, they do not believe in that literally, but they use these expressions to represent what they see. ('Abduh 1947, 399)]

Several medieval tolerant Muslim scholars<sup>13</sup> considered the wonders that remained from ancient societies as “visible signs of a divine intelligence, which assure the viewer that there is an order and wisdom behind an otherwise confusing world” (Elias 2012, 173). El-Dally records a rational statement of Abu-Ja'far al-Idrisi (d.1251), the author of the oldest known extensive study of the Pyramids, answering a question about why the Quran did not mention the pyramids; Al-Idrisi argues that

“the revealed Books were revealed to show the intellect and remind the forgetful, and to make clear the path of righteousness and prevent people from falling into the flames, and to impress with evidences those who are stubborn and demonstrate all the interests in the living world as well as the hereafter. They are not to tell about what will happen in the future or happened in the past which is what people often want to know of the epics of kings and marvels of land and sea. Where these are mentioned, it is generally only with enough detail to give examples to those with insight.” (translated by El Dally 2007, 12-13)

Moreover, the Arabic school of Egyptology will not be able to overcome this dependency on Euro-American knowledge unless it can establish a genuine and autonomous scholarship that engages directly with AE literature and treatments of medieval Arabic linguistics and poetics. Unfortunately, the Arabic school of AE language and its literature is not capable of existing without an honest partnership with Euro-American institutions and scholars. Euro-American institutions should help to achieve this intellectual decolonization by integrating scholars and students from the Arab world into their institutions, especially those scholars who are eager to disturb the Euro-centric boundaries of their colonial past. The Arabic school of Egyptology should produce counternarratives against the conceptual and disciplinary



divorce between Egyptology and African Studies to teach the new generations how to avoid Eurocentricism (Heard 2022, 81). Unfortunately, in modern Egypt, there are racist slogans that play down the African context of ancient and modern Egypt for political and chauvinistic reasons. The history of ancient and modern Egypt is part of the history of Africa and cannot be separated. The Egyptians are Africans because they are part of the ancient Nile Valley civilizations. Some of this modern Egyptian propaganda associate Africa with poverty and disease. This uncivilized stereotype image was designed by White colonial supremacy “to divide population groups for the benefit of the Western system.” (Davies 2022, 165) Vanessa Davies argues convincingly that “A recognition of shared pasts, presents, and futures breaks down divisions imposed by hegemonic powers, exposes the myth of cultural distinctiveness, and reintegrates communities” (Davies 2022, 169).

The criticism that I directed to Eurocentrism can also be directed against any future scholar who will use this hegemonic approach but with Arabic terms, concepts, and theories; i.e. by imposing the Arabic literary and philosophical terms without considering the conceptual differences of the culture under study. Issues of difference, not just similarity, are key targets for such comparisons. Those different aspects form the unique character of the culture under study. Few trends in modern linguistics stand against the capture of non-European languages by preconceived categories and terms rooted in Eurocentric models. For example, Patience Epps (2011, 648) says that linguists should “produce descriptions in formats that will enable and facilitate comparison across languages, but also remain true to the languages themselves, without forcing them into ill-fitting predetermined categories”. Part of the aim of this AE – Arabic comparative methodology is to challenge Eurocentric trends in textual and philological practices by offering an alternative textual analysis, justified by certain affinities in the language systems and explored by Arabic literary criticism. It should be clear that the aim of such comparisons is not simply to replace the Eurocentric methodologies with an Arabocentric one. Certainly, my understanding of the term “intellectual decolonization” does not glorify “any” Arabic scholarship of AE language and literature because it is/was mainly produced in Arabic or is held comparatively with Arabic. The term “intellectual decolonization” in my understanding is attached to the alternative methodologies that challenge and avoid the long-established exaggerations of harmful nationalism, whether it is Eurocentric or Arabocentric. Dogmatic chauvinism, whether rooted in Eurocentrism or Arabocentrism, is more harmful than useful and must be countered by intellectual decolonization that espouses genuine empirical scientific debates.

## Acknowledgements

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## Notes

1. On the negative representation of Pharaonic Egypt in the Old Testament, see Marzouk (2015).
2. The episode is titled "The language which Adam has spoken": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xK9kUWsJEI> (accessed 07/04/1).
3. The movements of regional collective identity usually tend to ignore the differences and not raise any conflict of identities while focusing their rhetorical messages on the similarities to create "the imagined community that is represented as homogeneous, as composed of alike people" (Coller 2006, 108).
4. On the representation of Nasser's ideologies in modern Egyptian literary and philosophical cultures, see Khalifah (2016).

5. On how the Rosetta Stone shifted in Europe the emphasis on the literary object to a focus on the philosophy of languages and the possibilities of translations across place and time, see Allan (2016, 39-54).
6. I have avoided two other types of reversed *jinās* that have been mentioned in Arabic *balāghab* sources. The first type is the equal reversed (المقلوب المستوي) where the word can be read equally from opposite directions; i.e., the perusing of such *jinās* words produces an identical reading when the word is read from left to right, or from right to left. This subdivision can be clearly included under the types of full reversed *jinās*, such as:

. (Say: God is] great, hoping for the reward of your God (Al-Gundy 1954, 107] كَثْرَ رِجَاءِ أَجْرٍ رِيكْ

In these two sets of reversed *jinās* words, the reader can reach the same words by reversing the direction of the letters (كَثْرَ - رِيكْ) and (أَجْرَ - رِجَاءَ). The *balāghab* sources thought that full reversed *jinās* can only be applied to words that do not read identically from both sides, such as the two words رقم (number) and قمر (moon). The second type is the semantic reversed sentence العكس (مقلوب), where a verse consisting of two sentences employs creatively the same words in each sentence to mean the opposite meaning. The variation here is between two short sentences not two words, such as: يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ

*He brings forth the living from the dead and he brings forth the dead from the living* (Qur'ān 30: 19).

7. Some *balāghists* referred to some individual Arabic words that have the same meaning when they are read from both directions, such as bāb – باب (door); k'k – كعك (cake); khūkh – خوخ (peach); and shāsh – شاش (lawn) (Al-Gundy 1954, 109).
8. On the visual functions of so-called “determinatives”, see Rashwan (2019, 143–150).
9. This reversed *jinās* structure of snb and sbn was one of the indications that Richard Parkinson employed to confirm that this sentence is part of a “magico-medical incantation”. In the previous phrase, the writer asks the addressee to bring a portion of baked bread made of wheat and some fat extracted from flesh, and all of that should be brought from the SA, which means “field”, “countryside”, “marsh”, or “swamp”.
10. This word is a good example of the contradictions between the fixed transliteration of the modern dictionaries and the visual variety of the AE spellings. The orthography and probably the sound of each word may change over time. This word can be written with or without this additional letter in the beginning ٱلْأَمْرُ – ٱلْأَمْرُ – ٱلْأَمْرُ – ٱلْأَمْرُ. The word can be part of this adverbial expression ٱلْأَمْرُ ٱلْأَمْرُ (tp iAt), meaning “due time to do something”.
11. On the origin of these Salafi movements and their political ideologies which have been framed as a religious sect of Sunni Muslims, see Rock-Singer (2022) and Cook (1992).
12. For a comprehensive reading of Muhammad ‘Abduh intellectual legacy with a focus on his early mystical, philosophical and political writings, see Scharbrodt 2022.
13. For employing the Hebrew Bible and New Testaments by early Muslim exegetes to produce Quranic commentaries, see Saleh (2014, 287–291). On the similarities and differences between the Quran and the Bible regarding the story of Exodus, see Sinai (2017, 203–208).

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