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Egyptian Culture in a Historical Context: Founder of contemporary cultural renaissance of Egypt, Sarwat Okasha

"If a man lacks someone to remember what he has, he must remember it."

Shakespeare

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Abstract

The intellectual culture of Egypt has played an important role in its politics since the beginning of the modern state-building processes in the Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha eras. The semi-modern Egyptian culture and its intellectuals were essential to the Egyptian influence in the Arab region and in the semi-liberal and Nasserist periods, attracted brilliant Arab minds until the defeat of the Arab States in the Arab-Israeli War of June 1967. During the Nasserist period, Egyptian culture and intellectuals were an essential part of Egypt's influence over the Arab region, mainly because of its intellectual and cultural production in theater, cinema, the plastic arts, and artistic newspapers, magazines, and books, and its translations of foreign languages, particularly English and French.

This article discusses one of the founders of contemporary Egypt's cultural renaissance, Dr. Sarwat Okasha; born one hundred years ago (1921) and considered as one of the most prominent figures in the July 1952 revolution, second to Gamal Abdel Nasser. This paper also reviews Okasha's major cultural projects during his two terms as Minister of Culture from 1958 to 1962 and from 1966 to 1970. Based on a progressive scientific strategy and an open future vision, Okasha laid the foundations for modern cultural life in Egypt and established several leading Egyptian cultural institutions, all of which have remained vibrant and effective to this day. This article also examines Okasha's advocacy of a fair, humanitarian "Democracy of Culture," which was manifested in his establishing many cultural palaces across Egypt's regions and provinces. Okasha sought to reformulate the Egyptian conscience, succeeded in establishing a cultural infrastructure in the country, and devised a grand strategy for Egypt's cultural and intellectual advancement. In this study, the light will be shed on the exceptional duality that brought together General Charles de Gaulle, and the French writer "Andre Malraux", as one of France's greatest writers in approaching the same measure applies to the duality that combined Gamal Abdel Nasser and Sarwat Okasha.

Keywords: Sarwat Okasha, Democracy of Culture, Egypt's Cultural Renaissance, Nasserist period, "André Malraux", Abu Simbel.

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1. Introduction

Egyptian culture and civilization are considered as one of the oldest of their kind. With over six thousand years of recorded history, Egypt has maintained a strikingly complex and stable culture that later went on to influence the cultures in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. After the Pharaonic era, Egypt came under the influence of Hellenic, Christian, and Islamic cultures. Today, many aspects of these cultures exist with newer elements, such as modern Western culture, which itself has its roots in ancient Egypt.

The work of the early nineteenth-century scholar, Rifa'a et-Tahtawi, gave rise to the Egyptian Renaissance, which marked the transition from Medieval to Early Modern Egypt. Tahtawi's work renewed interest in Egyptian antiquity and exposed Egyptian society to Enlightenment principles. Along with education reformer, Ali Mubarak, Tahtawi co-founded a native Egyptology school that looked for inspiration to medieval Egyptian scholars, such as Al-Suyuti and Al-Maqrizi, who had studied the history, language, and antiquities of Egypt. Egypt's renaissance peaked in the late 19th and early 20th centuries through the work of intellectuals, such as Muhammad Abduh, Ahmed Lutfi el-Sayed, Tawfiq el-Hakim, Louis Awad, Qasim Amin, Salama Moussa, Taha Hussein, and Mahmoud Mokhtar, all of whom forged a progressive liberal path for Egypt that was expressed as a commitment to individual freedom, secularism, and faith in science.(Ead. Hamed,A. 2019)

Egypt was the first major civilization to codify design elements in art and architecture. The wall paintings done in the service of the Pharaohs had rigid visual codes and meanings. Egyptian civilization is renowned for its colossal pyramids, colonnades, and monumental tombs, with well-known examples being the Pyramid of Djoser designed by the ancient architect and engineer Imhotep, the Sphinx, and the temple of Abu Simbel. Modern and contemporary Egyptian art, however, is as diverse as any in the world art scene, from the vernacular architecture of Hassan Fathy and Ramses Wissa Wassef to Mahmoud Mokhtar's famous sculptures to the distinctive Coptic iconography of Isaac Fanous.

Literature is also a very important cultural element in Egypt. Egyptian novelists and poets were among the first to experiment with modern styles of Arabic literature, with the forms they developed consequently being widely imitated throughout the Middle East.

Egypt has been one of the boldest Middle Eastern countries in the music industry. However, because its music was disrupted by foreign influences, bad admixing, and abused oriental styles, the next generation of Egyptian music is considered to be on the rise. Starting from the late '90s, new talents have been emerging across many different genres influenced by many different cultures. Rock, metal, oriental jazz, and folk music are now becoming well-known and attracting both Egyptian and non-Egyptian fans.(Ead, Hamed, A., 2020)

2. Who is Dr. Sarwat Okasha?

An armed forces officer who participated in the Palestinian war. A member of the Revolutionary Command Council and a military attaché in Egyptian embassies in Berlin, Paris, Madrid, and Rome. A scholar with a doctorate in literature from the Sorbonne, a Minister of Culture, and a member of the Egyptian Scientific Association.

He was the first Egyptian Minister of Culture and the eighth one on an international level and is regarded as a hero for saving the Egyptian monuments in Abu Simbel and Philae after the High Dam building. He was also an editor-in-chief, an ambassador, a minister, a chair of the National Bank board of directors, the head of the Supreme Council of Arts and Letters, a fellow of the Royal British Academy, and a founder of

scientific, cultural, and literary sites in Egypt and abroad. He was a lover of the Egyptian culture and art that have given Egypt its modern, bright face.

Okasha lived as a fighting monk to establish contemporary Egyptian culture, for which he roamed the world to remove any rust of monotony from the Egyptian mind. He founded the House of Books and Documents and Cultural Palaces throughout the Republic, as well as the Institutes of Ballet, Conservatoire, and Art Criticism, which all became parts of the Academy of Arts. He also reconstructed the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, the Arab Music Ensemble, and the National Ensemble for Folk Arts, the Cinema and Theater Foundation, the National Circus, Sound and Light Shows, a full-time system for writers and artists, the Mokhtar Museum, the Sun Boats Museum, and the House of Textiles. During his time in office, famous people were appointed to conduct cultural work, such as Yahya Haqqi, Zaki Naguib Mahmoud, Naguib Mahfouz, Ali Al-Ra'I, Abdel Azim Anis, Mahmoud Amin Al-Alam, and Fouad Zakaria. And Salah Taher, Salah Abu Seif, Mahmoud Saeid, among others, whose works in various forms of art really flourished during the same period.

Okasha was the Minister of Culture twice, from 1958 to 1962 and from 1966 to 1970, and between these two periods, he was the Chair of the Egyptian National Bank Board of Directors. Before his appointment as minister, Okasha was an ambassador in Rome. During his time as the Minister of Culture, there was an unprecedented theatrical renaissance, which saw the emergence of great playwrights such as Rashad Rushdi, Youssef Idris, Saad Eddin Wahba, Mikhail Roman, Mahmoud Diab, Abdel Rahman Al-Sharqawi, and Noman Ashour. During this time, the play "Yalil Ya Ain" and the works of Sayed Darwish and Zakaria Ahmed were shown, and the poet Abdul Rahman Al-Khamisi Arabized "The Blessed Widow" by Franzlihar.

Dr. Sarwat Okasha authored, investigated, and translated more than 55 books, including the 19 volume Encyclopedia of Art History "The eye hears and the ear sees," which took him 25 years. He translated all of Gibran's works, wrote political and cultural memoirs, wrote in English and French, and expressed his loyalty to Egypt in his book "Egypt in the Eyes of Strangers." He also published visual arts glossaries for photography, sculpture, architecture, theater, music, ballet, and opera. Among his translations were Ovid's poems, the last of the Augustan poets, who was born in 43 BCE, died in 18 CE and was exiled by Emperor Augustus to the city of Tomis on the Black Sea after the appearance of his book "The Art of Passion" as punishment for his reckless adventure with Princess Juliana, the emperor's daughter.

While Okasha was keen to preserve Egypt's national identity, he also wished to show openness to all global cultural currents by opening Egypt's windows to the fresh air. His encyclopedic cultural knowledge, however, extended beyond his homeland and native civilization because of his focus on Egypt's continuous heritage, and his belief that any closing or reclosing would be evidence of backwardness.

Okasha's generation believed in the axiom that throughout history, the artist has been a political philosopher and that art represented rebellion, disobedience, and protest. Two Greek examples from the fifth century BCE are Chrysius and Nicias Teze, who made the famous group of sculptures known as "The death of the tyrant" to immortalize two friends, Harmodius and Aristo Giton, after they had been assassinated by Hipparchus, the tyrant of Athens. This group of sculptures has been preserved in the National Museum of Athens and remains to this day a lesson for kings and rulers not to be arrogant and tyrannical. In Madrid, Spain, Guernica, the famous 1937 painting by Pablo Picasso, is a blatant symbolic expression of the brutal bombing of the town of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War by planes with bombs supplied by Nazi Germany.

3. Cultural Projects of Sarwat Okasha

After the July 1952 revolution, Okasha claimed that the cultural institutions needed to keep pace with the revolutionary changes taking place in various other sectors to provide intellectual support for the problems and challenges facing Egyptians. Perhaps the most impressive achievement of Sarwat Okasha, in my opinion, was the formulation of Egypt's first integrated cultural strategy.

With a consensus from his fellow intellectuals, the first drafts to develop a cultural plan in Egypt occurred at the General Conference for Culture and Arts held at the Cairo Opera House from April 18 to April 22, 1959. However, the full cultural policy appeared in his most famous statement before the National Assembly Services Committee on June 16, 1969, which was consequently published under the title “Cultural Policy,” in which it was noted that he had tried very early to establish an Egyptian cultural policy. This policy defined Egypt’s cultural future with firmness and confidence and was a great success, with its influence still felt today in most cultural institutions.

As it was impossible to take advantage of culture at its highest, medium, and most simple levels unless each person had sufficient learning that allowed them to respond to the cultural or artistic call, the state had to enable every person to obtain these rights by providing the means to have a decent life, raising the level of learning, and removing the rampant illiteracy.

4. Cultural Democracy

Cultural democracy is a deeply radical and beautiful idea. It is the ultimate extension of the idea of democracy: that each one of us, each community, and each cultural minority has rights that deserve respect, and that each must have a voice in the vital decisions that affect the quality of our lives. It inspires a vision of humanity that embraces us all. Each of us is creative, gifted, and potentially powerful. Our communities are creative organisms that dynamically change in response to the appearance of new people, ideas, and circumstances. Cultural democracy calls forth our most loving selves, illuminates places where healing is needed and challenges us to develop the best in ourselves, to be respectful of the harmonious interrelations of all life on the planet. We need to make a strong argument for cultural democracy and community cultural development, using multiple realms of knowledge to show how this work advances essential public policy goals. Our task is to bring community arts and cultural activism into the public policy arena as potent ways to embody full, multidimensional citizenship and stimulate the participation needed. So, an integral part of the duties of a modern state is to expand the cultural environment beyond a specific affluent group.

In Egypt, the duty of the state is to ensure that culture and art are a source of inspiration for everyone by giving them the room to flourish and having a cultural policy that suits the economic and educational needs of the society without necessarily specifying or directing the cultural or creative content. Cultural life requires first and foremost the freedom to research, criticize, innovate, express, and deliver cultural products to all people.

Dr. Okasha had to develop what he called a “cultural democracy,” which he sought to achieve by establishing cultural palaces for the first time in Egypt in all regions of the country to ensure every Egyptian citizen had the opportunity to experience the aesthetics of the arts and the creativeness of culture’s various paths. This allowed the creative energies of the people to be unleashed by their active participation in building a collective cultural awareness. He urged the going too far in the perception of the state’s mission of cultural development, which means that it will not eliminate the spontaneity of individuals, but on the contrary put its resources and capabilities at the service of creativity, and involve a large crowd of people in moving forward with cultural work, and encouraging the flourishing of values. As stated in the UNESCO Decade for Cultural Development that began in 1988, cultural aspirations of all kinds are beneficial in achieving the four objectives; recognizing the cultural dimension of development, respecting cultural identities, expanding the scope of participation in cultural life, and reviving international cultural cooperation.”

Ministry of Culture in Egypt started its plan in 1959 based on a deep belief that its role should not be limited to providing only high-level mental pleasures to the class capable of enjoying them; rather, its role should be to actively achieve the greatest degree of rational and sentimental equivalence so that a knowledge of the arts and its secrets could be spread to all groups of society without relegating culture to the common or the simple or eliminating excellence and creativity. Cultural democracy, therefore, became a requirement for development, provided that it is able to be provided to the public without much effort. Therefore, as the

responsibility of the state is to engender cultural production for all people, artists and intellectuals must work with the state to find appropriate formulas in which to present the fruits of thought and the flowers of art on the widest scale and in the widest circles.

Dr. Sarwat Okasha embodied the need for an integrated awareness of cultural enlightenment, as he “worked in art as a scientist, and in science as an artist” and developed a rhythm of work and creativity to accomplish all that should not be overlooked, as exemplified in the title of his encyclopedia, “An eye that hears and an ear that sees.”

5. Memoirs of Sarwat Okasha-“The Sword and the Pen”

Sarwat Okasha began his interesting work “My Memoirs in Politics and Culture,” the first edition of which was issued in 1988, with his experiences in the military. His father was an officer in the Royal Guard, and he narrates how he entered and graduated from Military College and joined the Egyptian army cavalry, which coincided with World War II and the closing chapters of pre-revolution Egypt.

Okasha (born in 1921) knew the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1940s. They found they had common concerns in many areas, such as the conditions in Egypt, the army, the king, and the British occupation. The two joined forces in the Free Officers Organization, which was a group of army officers led by Mohammed Naguib and Gamal Abdel Nasser.

In front of his book “My Memoirs in Politics and Culture” of more than a thousand pages, a reader may wish to resort to selection; however, the reader becomes drawn to the writer’s style, his encyclopedic knowledge, and his sincerity.

Between “The Sword and the Pen” is about a revolutionary officer who contributed to events that changed the face of Egypt and perhaps the whole region. This officer held several positions, including the Minister of Culture for more than one period during the Nasserist era, after which he engaged in his own studies and research that elevated the awareness of many.

In his sprawling memoirs, there are many testimonies about himself and others. Sarwat Okasha narrated memories and the names of both the famous and the obscure. His biography, his testimonies, and some of his “disputes” showed his usual gentleness and did not descend into exaggeration or despondency.

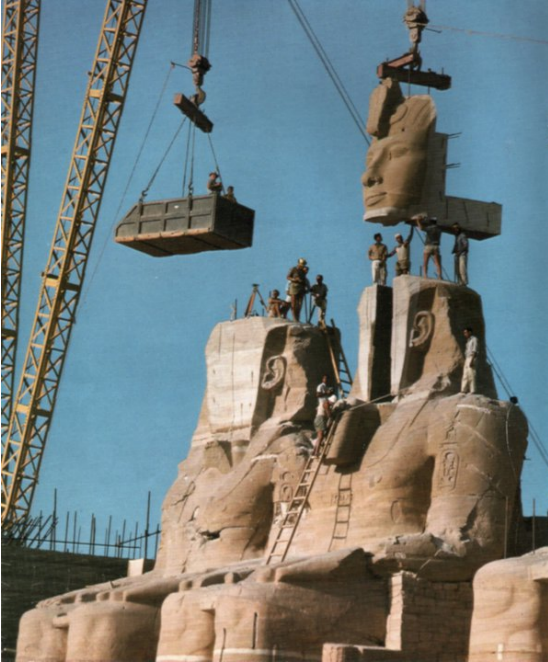
The public character of Okasha overlaps with his private one in the memoirs as the writer’s pen reveals his love for the arts. In the section discussing the Free Officers Organization, for example, he discusses the beginnings of the organization, how its members reunited, and their publications, after which the historical talk transforms into a story about his relationship since childhood with classical music in particular, and his love for “opera” parties and the fine arts.

Okasha joined the Faculty of Arts at Cairo University and received a diploma in journalism. At the same time, he joined the Staff College and succeeded in obtaining a degree to advance his rank in the army. In his memoirs, he speaks about his role in planning the 1952 revolution and the coup that was carried out by the army that deposed former King Farouk.

After the revolution, Okasha was entrusted with supervising the “Al-Tahrir” magazine, the mouthpiece of the revolution. He was able to promote the magazine and raise its distribution rate until he published an article on the role of his cavalry in the revolution and the efforts he had made in that event. According to Okasha, this provoked some influential people in the Revolutionary Command Council to censor the magazine and the army to announce that these were not their thoughts.

Since that date (June 1953), the companions of the revolution’s path began to differ. A decision was then made to appoint Sarwat Okasha as military attaché in one of Egypt’s embassies. Some of his colleagues in the cavalry were dissatisfied, with some even considering the assassination of some of the leaders responsible for removing Okasha; however, Okasha refused to sanction this action.

6. André Malraux and Sarwat Okasha



From: <https://egyptophile.blogspot.com/2015/02/Sarwat-okacha-un-officier-libre-tres.html>

The larger of the two Abu Simbel temples is cut into 807 pieces, which will be transferred 60 meters higher.

6.1. André Malraux and Sarwat Okasha

Some of Okasha's fans and followers described him as the "André Malraux" of Egypt, after the French Minister of Culture and the great writer to whom President Charles de Gaulle of France had granted the same powers that Abdel Nasser had granted to "Sarwat Okasha."

This was a great honor for both Okasha and Malraux, but without the fanaticism that Malraux was better than Okasha. As an author, Malraux did not surpass Okasha as a civilized researcher, a historian of art, or as someone who gave his country the juice of his soul and thought.

When André Malraux was the Minister of Culture in France, he and Okasha succeeded in revolutionizing an international approach to the preservation of human heritage and in building cooperative bridges between Egypt and France. In 1966, Malraux paid an official visit to Egypt and traveled to the site of the temples with Okasha. He also opened the Tutankhamen exhibition in Paris, which was a great success. In the same year, the two ministers signed an agreement to study the Karnack temples. Everyone forgets Okasha's role in the international campaign even though he was able to agree that the dam could be built and the temples preserved at the same time.

6.2. Story of saving world-famous temples of Abu Simbel

Due to the Egyptian population explosion, Egypt decided to build the High Dam at Aswan. Unfortunately, its building would cause a major cultural disaster since most of the ancient temples of Nubia were going to be purely and simply swallowed up by the reservoir and therefore lost to ever. Among them were the world-famous temples of Abu Simbel.

To prevent this destruction, UNESCO turned to Christiane Desroches Noblecourt which had meanwhile become the curator of Egyptian Antiquities at the Louvre and therefore heir to this post of Jean-François Champollion, the French scholar who succeeded in deciphering the hieroglyphics in the fall of 1822.

Christiane Desroches Noblecourt began to establish an inventory of all threatened monuments. Then she took charge of finding the necessary funds to save as many of these monuments as possible. On March 8,

1960, Christiane Desroches Noblecourt, along with Sarwat Okasha, Egyptian Minister of Culture at that time, launched a solemn appeal for global solidarity from the UNESCO platform in Paris. In addition to the fourteen temples that it was imperative to move, it was necessary to carry out urgent excavations, on sites that were to be covered by tens of meters of water and which had until then been very little studied in detail. André Malraux, then Minister of State for Cultural Affairs, immediately responded to the joint call for help from Christiane Desroches Noblecourt and Sarwat Okasha: this call speaks to us in a voice as loud. We must save the temples of Nubia because with it the first world civilization publicly claims world art as its indivisible heritage. There is only one act over which neither the indifference of the constellations nor the eternal murmur of the rivers prevails: it is the act by which man snatches something from death.

Although the world was in the midst of the Cold War, fifty countries were going to mobilize, despite their ideological oppositions, to save these treasures of all mankind. The temples of Philae, Kalabcha, Ouadi esSéboua, Dakké, Derr and other sites were moved. The rescue operation that most fascinated world public opinion was that of the two famous temples of Abu Simbel. The first temple was cut out of 807 blocks of rock and the second in 235. All the blocks were transferred 60 meters higher and reassembled leaning against concrete domes on which were reconstituted two artificial hills to restore their original frame. origin. Among all the temples to be saved, one of the most delicate cases was that of the small temple of Amada because of the miniature and well-painted reliefs. Cutting it into blocks as in Abu Simbel was impractical, as the paintings would not have resisted. Seeing that everyone accepted the idea of seeing this temple engulfed by the salty waters of Lake Nasser, Christiane Desroches Noblecourt then took it upon herself to cry out: "France save him!" "

She asked two architects to come up with a method for moving the temple in one block. They then imagined putting the temple in prestressing, sliding concrete joists under its base, then placing it on a platform equipped with wheels, placing it on rails installed on purpose, and transporting the all by piston a few kilometers away, in a place sixty meters higher. In short, it was a matter of transporting the temple as it was by rail.

The idea having been deemed technically feasible, we had to give ourselves the financial means to achieve it. To this end, Christiane Desroches Noblecourt requested an audience with Charles de Gaulle, President of the Republic, who was unaware of the commitment she had dared to make herself, without referring it to anyone, on behalf of France. When he found out, he stiffened, "How, ma'am, did you.

6.3. Speech Delivered in Paris by André Malraux on March 8, 1960

In response to UNESCO's appeal "To save the monuments of Upper Egypt"

Today, for the first time, all nations - at the same time when many of them are waging a secret or proclaimed war - are called upon to save together the works of a civilization which does not belong to any of them. In the last century, such a call would have been illusory. Not that people ignored Egypt, its spiritual greatness, or its great monuments. But if the West knew Egypt better than it knew India or China, this was because it saw in her a province of the Bible. Through the Bible, Egypt, like Chaldea, belonged to the dawn of our own history. Of the forty centuries Napoleon evoked as he stood before the pyramids, the supreme moment was that in which they were beheld by Moses.

Egypt gradually conquered its autonomy within limits narrower than it seemed. Most of its Greco-Roman architecture and sculptures were still intact; Baudelaire had even spoken of Egyptian naivety. These grandiose temples were the only witnesses bequeathed to Egypt by the ancient East, with these cataleptic masterpieces for three millennia uniting the country in the same eternal sleep. All this was more dependent on history than on art. In 1890 as in 1820, though the West was moved to study Egypt, it was not moved to safeguard her works.

Within our own century, however, has come one of the greatest developments in man's spiritual history. These temples which had been looked on only as records have again become living witnesses; these statues have acquired a soul. Not, to be sure, the spirit which first informed them; but one which is their own, which we find nowhere else but in them, and which nobody before us has found there.

We talk of this art as testimony to a civilization in the same sense that we say that Romanesque art is a testimony to Roman Christianity. Yet, in fact, we can only really comprehend a culture that still survives. Egyptologists have done noble work: but the faith of a priest of Amun, the fundamental attitude of the Egyptian toward the world around him remains elusive. The humor of the ostraca, the homely figurines, the texts in which a soldier calls Ramses II by his nickname: Rara, as familiarly as veterans used Napoleon, the worldly wisdom of the legal texts; how are we to link these to the Book of the Dead, to the funereal majesty of great statues, to a civilization which seems to have continued for three thousand years dedicated only to the celebration of the after-life?

The only ancient Egypt which can come alive for us is the one suggested by its art and this is an Egypt that never existed, any more than the kind of Christianity which would be inferred from Romanesque art if that were our only witness to it. Yet Egypt has survived in her art, not through famous names or lists of victories. Despite Kadesh, one of history's decisive battles, notwithstanding the cartouches carved and recarved at the behest of the bold pharaoh seeking to force his lineage upon the gods, Sesostris has less meaning for us than the unfortunate Akhnaton. The face of Queen Nefertiti haunts our painters as Cleopatra has inspired our poets; but whereas Cleopatra is a queen without a face, Nefertiti, for us, is a face without a kingdom.

Egypt therefore survives by virtue of certain forms. And we know today that these forms, like those of all religious civilizations, are not defined by their reference to the living they profess to portray, but by the conventions which gives them access to a world that is not of the living. At their highest expression, Egyptian conventions were designed to mediate between ephemeral men and the controlling stars. It is an art that consecrates night.

This is what we all experience when we approach the Sphinx of Giza head-on, as I remember doing the last time I saw it at twilight: "How the second, furthestmost pyramid enfolds the view, and how it makes this colossal death-mask seem like the guardian of some trap set to lure the heaving desert and the darkness. This is the hour when the oldest fashioned forms recapture the soft murmur with which the desert echoes the timeless devotions of the East; the hour when they restore to life these places where the gods were heard; when they banish the immensity of chaos and order the stars which seemingly emerge from night simply to gravitate round them."

In such a way, during three thousand years, Egyptian art translated the temporal into the eternal.

Let there be no misapprehension about this today: it is not as a testimony to history that moves us, nor as what was once called beauty. "Beauty" has become one of the major enigmas of our time, the mysterious presence which brings the Egyptian masterpieces into communion with the statues of our own cathedrals or the Aztec temples, or the Indian and Chinese grottoes; with the paintings by Cézanne and Van Gogh, with the greatest artists, both dead and living; within the treasure of the first world civilization.

This is an immense resurrection, of which the Renaissance will soon appear to us as a timid outline. For the first time, humanity has discovered a universal language of art. We clearly feel the force, even if we only partly understand its nature. No doubt this strength is due to the fact that this treasure of art, of which humanity is becoming aware of for the first time, brings us the most brilliant victory of human works over death. Against the invincible "never again" that reigns over the history of civilizations, this surviving treasure opposes its own mysterious grandeur.

Of the power that made Egypt emerge from the prehistoric night, nothing now remains; but the impulse which made the colossi are now threatened, the masterpieces of the Cairo museum emerge from and speak to us with a voice as loud as that of the master craftsmen of Chartres, or the genius of Rembrandt. The emotion we share with the creators of these granite statues is not even one of love, nor a common feeling for death nor even, perhaps, a similar way of looking at their work; yet before their work, the accents of anonymous sculptors forgotten during two thousand years seem to us as much untouched by the succession of empires as the accents of mother love.

This is why European crowds filled exhibitions of Mexican art; of the many Japanese flooding to exhibitions of French art, and the millions of Americans to see Van Gogh. This is why the ceremonies commemorating the death of Rembrandt were inaugurated by the last kings of Europe, and the exhibition of our own stained-glass windows by the brother of the last emperor of Asia. That is why so many sovereign names are joining in the call we are making today.

If UNESCO tries to save the monuments of Nubia, it is because they are immediately threatened. It goes without saying that they would try to save other great remains, Angkor or Nara for example, if they were threatened in the same way. For the artistic heritage of men, we appeal to the universe as others are doing this week for the victims of the Agadir disaster. "May we not have to choose, you said earlier, between the effigies and the living!" For the first time, you are proposing to put at the service of effigies, in order to save them, the immense means which, until now, have only been put in the service of the living, perhaps because the survival of effigies has become a form of life for us. At the moment when our civilization divines a mysterious transcendence in art and one of the still obscure sources of its unity, at the moment when it brings together the masterpieces of so many civilizations which hated or ignored each other, you are proposing an action that brings all men together to defy the forces of dissolution. Your appeal is historic, not because it proposed to save the temples of Nubia, but because through it, the first world civilization publicly proclaims the world's art as its indivisible heritage. In days when the West believed its cultural heritage began in Athens, it could nonetheless look on with equanimity while the Acropolis crumbled away.

The slow flood of the Nile has reflected the melancholy caravans of the Bible, the armies of Cambyses and Alexander, the knights of Byzantium and Islam, and the soldiers of Napoleon. No doubt when the sand-storm blows across it, its ancient memory no longer distinguishes the brilliant notes of Rameses's triumph from the pathetic dust that settles again in the wake of defeated armies. And when the sand is scattered again, the Nile is once more alone with its sculpted mountains, its colossal effigies whose motionless reflection has for so long been part of its echo of eternity.

But see, old river, whose floods allowed astrologers to fix the oldest date in history, men are coming now, from all parts of the world, who will carry these giants far away from your life-giving, destructive waters. Let night fall, and you will once again reflect the constellations under which Isis performed her funeral rites, the star that Ramses contemplated. But the humblest worker who will save the effigies of Isis and Ramses will tell you what you will hear for the first time: "It is only an act over which neither the neglect of the constellations nor the eternal murmur of the constellations prevail rivers: it is the act by which man snatches something from death."

7. Sarwat Okasha as Minister

Sarwat Okasha is considered the most skilled and famous person to assume the Ministry of Culture and his achievements testify to his unique genius. The period during which he was Minister of Culture, whether in the first period (1958–1962) or when he returned as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture from 1966 to 1970 was "One of the most important periods in the history of the ministry."

Sarwat Okasha believed that his presence in the position was not an honor, nor even a mandate in the sense now understood, but a role he had to play and a message that he needed to work to reach the desired goal. That made him recognized the importance of the need for a cultural policy and a real cultural ministry prior

to assuming the position. The vision, training, available capabilities, implementation mechanisms, and powers of the role entrusted to it were not initially clear, its future was accepted by the intellectuals and the masses in general. He believed that revolutionary changes were needed in various sectors after July 1952.

The cultural policy during the Sarwat Okasha era was based on a unity of thought and goals, with the culture revolving in time with the society's movement. He believed the revolutions in the economic and social fields had to be accompanied by cultural revolutions, whether people agreed or not, it was necessary to put things within the historical circumstances of those days.

Also, he believed that cultural institutions needed to keep pace with the revolutionary changes in the other sectors after the July 1952 revolution and to serve as intellectual support for the problems and challenges facing Egyptians at that defining stage.

8. Mass Cultural Authority and the Democracy of Culture

When Sarwat Okasha established the Culture Palaces or Mass Culture Authority, he did not see that there could be a prosperous national culture unless it expressed all society in the city and the villages. If a group was neglected, the culture will lack comprehensiveness, and there is no comprehensive culture unless there is no difference between all classes of society.

The implementation of his idea began with performances to workers on the stage of the Opera House for a ballet break, the opera "Prince Igor" by Alexander Borodin, the operetta "The Eloquent Widow" by Franz Lehár, and a performance of the "Bakhchi Saray Fountain" ballet by Asafiev in Aswan, the shows were received with high enthusiasm by the people of Aswan. Another show for the people of the Red Sea was an advanced dance troupe and rural seminars for farmers. Sarwat Okasha sought to mix the culture of the capital with the culture of the regions, taking this from that, and taking that from this. The democracy of culture that Okasha believed in and his attempt to bring it to the level of the common people in order to not lose the essence of culture but to take the public hands of to rise to its level, and the best way to pave, confirm, and it documents this in the establishment of cultural palaces, which began in 1959 in the countryside which the first time that Egypt had had cultural palaces.

9. Sarwat Okasha and Establishment of a Book Fair

The credit for the establishment of the Cairo International Book Fair goes to Sarwat Okasha. In his memoirs, he said, "The artist Abdel Salam Al-Sharif presented me with a proposal on the necessity of establishing an international book fair in Egypt, and I indicated to the Egyptian General Organization for Authoring and Publishing to adopt the proposal." He contacted the well-known international book market in Leipzig, Germany, and sent a delegate, Islam Shalaby, to prepare for the establishment of a similar exhibition on an Arab scale and to link it with the international book publishing movement by linking with participants at the annual Leipzig Fair. His enthusiasm and amazing efficiency led to the success of the idea. The book fair was held for the first time in January 1969, which provided an opportunity for universities and scientific bodies to access references at reasonable prices. The first exhibition was attended by 27 countries and more than 400 publishing houses and was visited by more than seventy thousand visitors over ten days."

10. Sarwat Okasha works

10.1. Encyclopedia of History of Art: (The eye hears and the ear sees):

- Ancient Egyptian Art: Architecture (1971).
- Ancient Egyptian art: Sculpture and Painting (1972).
- Ancient Egyptian Art: Alexandrian and Coptic Art (1976).
- Ancient Iraqi Art (1974).
- Religious Islamic and Arab Painting Art (1978).
- Islamic Persian and Turkish Painting Art (1983).
- Greek Art (1981).

- Ancient Persian art (1989).
- Renaissance Art: Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo (1988).
- Roman art (1991).
- Byzantine Art (1992).
- Art of the middle Ages (1992).
- Painting Art in Islamic Moghol India (1995).
- Time and the Melody Songs: from Apollo's Songs to Turangalila (1980).
- Aesthetic Values in Islamic Architecture (1981).
- Greeks between Mythology and Innovation (1978).
- Michelangelo (1980).
- Miraj Nameh (1981).
- Al-Wasiti's Art through Al-Hariri's Maqamat (1999).
- Dictionary of Cultural Idioms.
- Cautious Fond of Wagner (1975).
- Modern Man Crowning Ramses' Era (1971).
- Hurricane from the East or Genghis Khan (1952).
- Egypt in the eyes of outsiders (1984).
- My Diary in Politics and Culture (1988).
- Series of lectures in the College de France in 1973.

10.2. Translations

Okasha also translated many books including:

- The works of the poet Ovid such as Amores and Metamorphoses.
- The works of Khalil Gibran such as the Prophet.
- Ancient Egyptian Theatre, by Étienne Drioton (1967).
- Fond of Wagner, George Bernard Shaw (1965).
- Back to the Faith, by Henry Nick (1950).
- Mr. Adam, by Ban Frank (1948).
- Pastor's Pants, Thorne-Smith (1952).
- Mechanical War, Gen. Fuller (1942).
- Okasha's most important culture and civilization achievements
- Project saving the Monuments of Nubia and the Temple of Abu Simbel and Philae Temple.
- The Institutes of Ballet and Conservatoire, Cinema, and Art Criticism, which were then included in the Academy of Arts.
- The New Egyptian Book Library and Archives (Dar al-Kutub).
- Cultural Palaces.
- The Cairo Opera Ballet team.
- Sound and light shows at the Giza pyramids, the Saladin castle, and Karnak temple.
- The sun boats Museum.

10.3. International and local awards

Okasha won many international and local awards, including the State Appreciation Award in Arts in 1978, the Italian Medal in 1959, the Great Collar of the Dutch Orange-Nassau Order in 1961, the French Order of Arts and Letters with the degree of Commander in 1964, the UNESCO Silver Medal for saving the Abu Simbel temples and the monuments of Nubia 1968, the Legion Medal, the French Donner with the rank of Commander 1968, the Grand Medal of the Spanish Grand Cross by Alfonso X Al-Hakim 1968, the UNESCO Gold Medal for efforts to save the Philae temples and the monuments of Nubia 1970, the Grand Medal of Honor and the Austrian Golden Medal 1970, and the UAE honored him with the Al Owais Prizes in 2004 and 2005 and the Sheikh Zayed Book Award in 2007.

Conclusion

A hundred years since the birth of Egypt's official cultural history, we remember Dr. Sarwat Okasha as an organic intellectual, an exceptional minister, a distinguished translator, a symbolic founder stripped of pretentiousness, and an individual whose eye was on culture and whose horizons were directed to an audience of the poor and marginalized. He achieved in all aspects of creativity.

He was a great lover of art, and toured all Pharaonic and Islamic art schools and did not leave other arts in the Renaissance even the Persian and Turkish art, and traveled to all these schools and transferred this creative and high human heritage to the Arab library. His knowledge of art was encyclopedic, and lived as a monk in his sanctuary of art and creativity. He is considered the most famous Egyptian Minister of Culture, contributed significantly to the history of Egyptian culture. Although he was one of the partners in the 52 July Revolution, he chose another path when he took charge of the Ministry of Culture. During his time in this position, Egyptian culture witnessed one of its most brilliant stages of creativity, brilliance, and glamor. The Academy of Arts was one of his most important achievements of Okasha's cultural heritage because of the creativity given to the Egyptian graduates in theater, cinema, opera, drama, music, and criticism; they have led the creative process in Egypt and have lit the creative process in the Arab world.

Okasha was the instigator of this great project and left an unforgettable imprint on Egyptian cultural life because he was a free thinker who believed that the human mind was the most valuable thing a person possessed and that the true balance of civilization and progress was in the minds of people and all schools of creativity.

Dr. Sarwat Okasha was a longtime cultural warrior and a great professor. He was a pioneer of art criticism and art history, an investigator and translator of important books, and had a great appreciation for his person and his cultural achievements, with the practice of art criticism being at the heart of the process that critiques human creativity. He deserves to be nominated for the Cultural and Scientific Achievement Award for all his works, contributions, and the great services he rendered to Arab cultural life. May God have mercy on Dr. Okasha and reward him for the good he gave to his country and the Arab nation and help his students and fans continue to complete his cultural enlightenment project to ensure a more humane life.

In the testimony Dr. Fouad Zakaria, a great thinker, gave to Sarwat Okasha he said: "The culture in the era of the revolution was in fact an island somewhat isolated from the rest of the regime. This was mainly due to the strong personality of Sarwat Okasha.

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