

# مجموعة توفيق كنعان

الموارد / منشورات عن توفيق كنعان

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# TAWFĪQ CANAAN and His Contribution to the Ethnography of Palestine

By Birgit Mershen and Ulrich Hübner

TAWFĪQ CANAAN (September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1882 – January 5<sup>th</sup> 1964) the Palestinian physician and scholar who authored a great number of publications in German and English both in Palestinian ethnography and in his medical field of expertise – tropical medicine – was a remarkable man (Taf. 26–27)<sup>1</sup>. His bicultural spirit combined both a Palestinian cultural identity and a profound European educational background. While being befriended with American, European and Jewish scholars, he spoke up vehemently for the Palestinian cause. He wrote several articles and books on the subject, and he as well as his German wife MARGOT and his sister BADRA CANAAN were imprisoned by the British for their anti-mandate and anti-Zionist attitudes and activities. But more than anything CANAAN will always be remembered for his achievements in the field of Palestinian popular beliefs, such as written down in his famous books “Volksglaube und Medizin im Lande der Bibel” and “Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries” and as preserved in his famous collection of amulets and talismans.

## Introduction

Although his works are extensively used and quoted by researchers and scholars of Near Eastern popular beliefs and folklore<sup>2</sup>, little was to be read about the life of TAWFĪQ CANAAN in the decades following his death in 1964. In fact, until recently only short and incomplete biographies of CANAAN existed<sup>3</sup>.

A cultural event in October 1998, however, brought CANAAN back into the memory at least of his compatriotes. From October 1998 until February 1999 Bir Zeit University held an exhibition on CANAAN’s collection of Palestinian amulets. The exhibition was accompanied by a small catalogue, which in several articles honoured CANAAN’s scholarly contributions in the field of Palestinian folklore. To complement the information gaps in this brochure K. NASHEF presented a much more detailed and comprehensive biography of CANAAN in Arabic, an English translation of which was subsequently published in Jerusalem Quarterly File (2002) under the title “Tawfiq Canaan: His Life and Works”.

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<sup>2</sup> *E. g.* MERSHEN 1982.

<sup>3</sup> Y. CANAAN 1988; AL-AWDAT 1971 cited in ‘ABDULLAH 1998; RHEIN 1962; LAPP/ALBRIGHT 1964; E. SCHNELLER 1964; B. and M. CANAAN 1966; OLPP 1932, 59, Taf. XI (portrait photography); MALSCH 1998, (portrait photography); KHALIDI (*ed.*) 1984, fig. 197 (Arab Medical Conference, YMCA Jerusalem 1933); NEUBERT-PREINE 1998, fig. 41 (ca. 1950/1951).

## TAWFĪQ CANAAN and His Time

CANAAN's lifetime fell into the historical period that witnessed the Palestinian tragedy from its very preludes, the first Jewish settlements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, up to the first big refugee waves following the demolition of Palestinian villages and the systematic terror by the Zionist militia and paramilitary organizations and gangs in the 1940's, and the massacres of the 1950's.

He was an eyewitness to the last gasps of the Ottoman Empire, the revolution of the Young Turks, the British Mandate Period and the creation of the Jewish State. His life span ended three years before the Six-Days War of 1967. CANAAN was politically committed and whole-heartedly dedicated to the Arab cause.

His education, however, was Western, and his educational and cultural links in particular with Germany were manifold. TAWFĪQ CANAAN was born in *Bēt Ġālā* a village close to Jerusalem into the protestant family of BIŠĀRA CANAAN (ca. 1850 in *Kafr Šīma*/Lebanon – 1899 in *Bēt Ġālā*), the first Arab evangelist of the German Protestant Palestine Mission and founder of the Lutheran church in *Bēt Ġālā* and his wife KATHARINA CANAAN-ĠIRIUS (May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1851 – November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1923)<sup>4</sup>.

BIŠĀRA's grandparents had fled to Palestine before the Druze massacres on Christians in the Lebanon. His mother came as an orphan to the Kaiserswerther Mädchenwaisenheim (a home for orphan girls) Zoar in Beirut. She was trained in *Talitha Kumi* and later worked in the Kaiserswerther Hospital in Jerusalem, where she met BIŠĀRA. They married and had four sons and two daughters.

Both BIŠĀRA and his son studied at the Schneller School in Jerusalem. Located on a hill in the northwest of the old city, ca. 3 km from the Jaffa Gate, this school, also called the Syrian Orphanage, was founded by the German missionary JOHANN LUDWIG SCHNELLER (1820–1896) in 1860. In 1940 the school was closed by the British occupation forces and in 1948 the Israeli troops occupied the building and transformed it into the main quarter of the Israeli Secret Service<sup>5</sup>. LEONARD BAUER (1865–1964), author of the book "Volksleben im Lande der Bibel" (1903) and of the article "Arabische Sprichwörter" (1898), had been teacher in this school since 1890 and would surely have been teaching TAWFĪQ CANAAN and shaping his interest in the study of Palestinian Customs and Traditions<sup>6</sup>. In fact, like BAUER before him, CANAAN collected a great number of Palestinian proverbs, which he published in his various articles. But beyond the intellectual impulses given by other researchers and scholars CANAAN's interest in the country and its inhabitants apparently was a family heirloom BIŠĀRA CANAAN had transmitted to his children<sup>7</sup>.

In November 1898, TAWFĪQ CANAAN went to Beirut to study medicine at the Syrian Protestant College (now the American University of Beirut). In June 1905 he finished his studies with distinction.

His first employment after graduation was with the German Deaconesses Hospital, where he worked with Dr. THEODOR GRUSSENDORF (1902–1921 senior physician), and since 1919 in the Aussätzigen-Asyl (lepers' asylum) "Jesus-Hilfe" with Dr. med. ADALBERT EINSLER

<sup>4</sup> 'ABDULLAH 1998, 17; RAHEB 1990, 91–99.108.

<sup>5</sup> GORDON 2002; KADELBACH 1998; WAIBLINGER 2000.

<sup>6</sup> H. SCHNELLER 1965; SEEGER 2002.

<sup>7</sup> CANAAN 1961, 18.

(1848–1919)<sup>8</sup>, whose wife LYDIA EINSLER-SCHICK (1855–1944) also was a collector and researcher of the ethnography of Palestine<sup>9</sup>.

In 1913 he became Head of the Malaria Department in the International Health Bureau in Jerusalem and worked as a doctor in the Arab General Hospital in the *Šēḥ Badr* quarter (*Maḥanae Yehūdā*).

In 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1922 CANAAN stayed in Germany to develop his knowledge of bacteriology, tropical diseases, and microscopy. He learned from PETER MÜHLENS (1874–1943), REINHOLD RUGE (1862–1936), OTTO HUNTEMÜLLER (1879–1931), HANS MUCH (1880–1932) and others<sup>10</sup>. In 1912 he married MARGOT EILENDER (1886 Kairo – 1978 Jerusalem)<sup>11</sup>, a daughter of a German tradesman born and brought up in the Middle East. They had four children: YASMA (1912 Jerusalem – 2000 Croydon, England), THEO (1914 Jerusalem – 1954), NADA (1919 Jerusalem – 1989 Javea, Spain) and LEILA (1927 Jerusalem – 2000 London). The only son, an architect, lost his life in 1954 after an incident during the restoration of the Roman South Theatre in Gerasa.

As a Turkish citizen CANAAN ordered to serve as a doctor in the Turkish army during World War I<sup>12</sup>. In *Maʿān* he fell ill with typhus, in *Bir es-Sebaʿ* with cholera<sup>13</sup>. On the Sinai-front he was allotted a task with the Turkish-German expedition corps, where he ran several laboratories (*e. g.* in *Bēt Ḥanūn* north of Gaza, *Bir es-Sebaʿ* and in *Ḥafīr el-ʿAuḡā*)<sup>14</sup>. His brother WADĪʿ lost his life during the First World War in Palestine.

After the First World War he returned to the Kaiserswerther Hospital in Jerusalem (Taf. 28–29) and worked there considerate and friendly and also successfully with Dr. med. EBERHARD GMELIN and the matron THEODORA BARKHAUSEN (1869–1959) until 1939. At the same time (from 1919–1947) he worked with a small number of intervals at the lepers'

<sup>8</sup> HIS 1931, 205: “Dr. Einsler und Dr. Cahan [*sic!*], die zwei alteingesessenen Ärzte”. This most probably refers to T. CANAAN, as an “Dr. Cahan” is not known in Jerusalem at the time.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. the article of U. HÜBNER in this book.

<sup>10</sup> MÜHLENS 1912; 1914; 1939; WULF 1997; 2005, especially 21–23.30.50.55–56.58.102–104.106. 109; KLEWE 1931; BENTMANN 1936; OLPP 1932, 285–286.357–358; FISCHER (*ed.*) 1932, 148–160.

<sup>11</sup> Active in the Community of the Lutheran Church of Redeemer at Jerusalem, cf. HERTZBERG/FRIEDRICH (*ed.*) 1990, 60.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. CANAAN 1938; BECKER 1990, 169–295. One of his brothers, WADĪʿ, fell in the First World War in Palestine, cf. the memorial inscription on the Zion-cemetery at Jerusalem:

1914–1918  
AUS DEN GEMEINDEN JERUSALEMS HABEN ALS  
ANGEHÖRIGE DER DEUTSCH-ÖSTERREICHISCHEN WEHRMACHT  
IM WELTKRIEG IHR LEBEN GELASSEN:  
[. . .] WADIA CANAAN [. . .]

<sup>13</sup> SONNENTHAL-SCHERER 1918, 211.215.225–226; HEGLER 1935, 174: “die hervorragende Hilfe unseres Freundes Canaan, der übrigens im Sommer 1916 ebenfalls einen leichten Choleraanfall überstand”. Cf. VON REUSS 1936.

<sup>14</sup> HUNTEMÜLLER 1919, 1216: “Dr. Kanaan, früher Assistent am Hygienischen Institut in Jerusalem, [. . . has] hier [= at *Bēt Ḥanūn* north of Gaza] sehr wertvolle Arbeit geleistet”. MÜHLENS also mentions T. CANAAN several times in his publications, for example 1935, 144 (“mein früherer Mitarbeiter im Jerusalemer Gesundheitsamt, Sanitätshauptmann Dr. CANAAN” in Nessana), likewise HEGLER 1935, 167 “die Hilfe unseres deutsch-arabischen Freundes und Kollegen CANAAN, der nicht bloß mit seinen großen ärztlichen Kenntnissen der einheimischen Erkrankungen sondern auch als Kind des Landes durch seine Beziehungen und sein Verständnis für die Bevölkerung uns unermüdlich unschätzbare Dienste erwies”).

asylum “Jesus-Hilfe” in Jerusalem<sup>15</sup>. From 1939 to 1940 he was interned in Akko by the British, but he was released soon because of his personal reputation and his skills as a doctor.

In 1947 he founded the “Palestine Arab Medical Association”, where he was president for a long time and published its organ the *Medical Journal* for many years.

He was also a founding member of the “Palestine Oriental Society” (1920–1948) and co-publisher of the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*<sup>16</sup>. For both journals he wrote a number of medical and ethnological articles. In 1926 he became member of the “Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas”.

In 1948 his house in the *Musrara* quarter was burned down and his large library was destroyed with it<sup>17</sup>. He fled with his wife into the old town centre of Jerusalem. In 1950 the Lutherischer Weltbund appointed him as their director, senior physician and internist at the fugitive hospital of *Auguste-Victoria* on the Mount of Olives<sup>18</sup>, where he died on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1964. He was buried at the Lutheran Cemetery at Bethlehem. He had retired at the age of 75 and spent almost one decade of his active retirement in the neighbouring gardener’s house, which is the headquarters of the “Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes” today.

#### The Ethnographer CANAAN

CANAAN soon came to be a distinguished and sought after physician. At the same time he was able to develop his broad array of interests and profound knowledge in other fields such as religious beliefs, folklore, material culture, language. He had excellent knowledge of Arabic, German, Hebrew and English. He not only wrote around 45 articles on Arab folklore but also was a distinguished ethnography collector with a particular emphasis on objects related to his main field of interest: popular belief and medicine. Through his work as a medical doctor he had ample opportunity to learn about the religious and popular religious and medical concepts and practices of Palestinians from different religious and social backgrounds<sup>19</sup>. Therefore folk medicine and popular belief was the starting point and centre of most of his publications on ethnography.

The nineteen years from 1920, the year in which the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* started to appear, until 1938 were with more than thirty ethnographic publications his most productive years. CANAAN was a member of the society and published most of his research in its journal. His publications in this time were comprised of studies on popular belief, such as on the “fear cup” (1923a), “Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries” (1927a) “The Child in Palestinian Arab Superstition” (1927b), “Die Neugeborenen in der palästinischen Volkssitte” (1927c), “Arabic Magic Bowls” (1936a), “The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans” (1937/38).

Other articles more specifically deal with demonology: “Haunted Springs and Water Demons in Palestine” (1920/21), “Palestinian Demonology” (1926) and “Dämonenglaube im Lande der Bibel” (1929a).

<sup>15</sup> SCHWAKE 1983, 322–324, 339–341, 681–683, 690–692; HERTZBERG/FRIEDRICH (ed.) 1990, 65, 96, 109; EISLER/HAAG/HOLTZ 2003, 65, 113.

<sup>16</sup> THOMSEN 1924; CARTER 1997.

<sup>17</sup> GRANQUIST 1965, 11–12.

<sup>18</sup> For the Lutherischer Weltbund in the Near East cf. ISSA 1970, for the *Auguste Victoria* cf. in this volume the article by J. KRÜGER.

<sup>19</sup> VON RABENAU 1963, 1.

But CANAAN's achievements in this period also comprised research in further fields. His interest in the history of the country let him become involved in archaeology as well. He was member of the "American Schools of Oriental Research" and "most interested in the excavations being conducted in Palestine and Transjordan"<sup>20</sup>. In 1929 CANAAN actively participated in the Mond Expedition to Petra directed by GEORGE HORSFIELD. In the same year he published the results of his ethnographic and ethnohistorical work in Petra in a lengthy contribution to the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (1929b) entitled "Studies in the Topography and Folklore of Petra". This important article in five chapters includes an outline of the ethnography of Petra and its surroundings. It presents a meticulously recorded toponymy of Petra's topography, accompanied by a sketch map which still represents very valuable information. Being well versed in literature that had been written on Petra until that date CANAAN was able to correct the phonetic and other mistakes and pitfalls of previous researchers of place-names, such as A. MUSIL (1907; 1908) or A. B. W. KENNEDY (1925). But he did not fail to point out the difficulties in studying toponymy as well as the ambiguity and variations of terms according to the tribal origin of the informants. CANAAN also points to questions deserving further research through philologists.

Furthermore he compiled a list of the local Arabic names of monuments and the oral traditions and history attached to those, thus giving a most valuable insight into the Bedouin occupation of the site in pre-modern and earlier periods and the oral history surrounding the monuments. In a last chapter of this article he deals with the *Lijātne* Bedouin tribe of Petra. He provides a short account on their tribal organization, their seasonal migrations, their springs, grazing land, and on the social conditions of this tribe at the time of his observations. He describes certain of the tribe's customs and the saints they venerate. This publication is an excellent example of how TAWFĪQ CANAAN makes sensible and meticulous use of oral history information. In this article CANAAN furthermore demonstrates his capability to correct in a nonchalant way the most startling prejudices of certain contemporary authors. Without having recourse to cynicism he explains their erroneous conception of the *Lijātne* tribe as "Simeonites or other Beni-Israel" based on the alleged "Pharisaic locks" of the tribesmen as misinterpretation of contemporary tribal hair fashion<sup>21</sup>.

In the same phase of his ethnographic research he also studied other Bedouin tribes such as the "Azāzime-Bedouinen und ihr Gebiet" (1928a), and "The Ṣaqr Bedouins of Bîsān" (1936b). That these informations are still valuable and of academic significance is illustrated by a recent English translation of the article about the *Azāzime* by WILLIAM TEMPLER, published in *Arab World Geography* in 1999, seventy-one years after the German original had appeared.

Another important article was his study on "The Palestine Arab House: Its Architecture and Folklore" (1932–33), dealing with the architecture as well as the folklore of Palestinian dwellings. CANAAN was also interested in the state and condition<sup>22</sup> of contemporary agriculture as well as in the related folklore as attested in his articles "Der Ackerbau in Palästina" (1909), "Die Wintersaat in Palästina" (1916), "Plant-lore in Palestinian Superstition" (1928b) and in the traditional peasant calendar, "Der Kalender des palästinensischen Fellachen" (1913b), or "Folklore of the Seasons in Palestine" (1923b).

<sup>20</sup> Y. CANAAN 1988, 150.

<sup>21</sup> CANAAN 1929b, 199.

<sup>22</sup> NASHEF 2002, 2–3.

CANAAN furthermore published and lectured about the Palestinian Arab Cause. He foresaw the troubles lying ahead due to the Jewish immigration, especially in the 1930's, and expressed his deep concern through writing a book in 1936 entitled "Conflict in the Land of Peace" (1936c)<sup>23</sup>. The other book he wrote on the issue was entitled "The Palestine Arab Cause" (1936d). In 1939 CANAAN, his German wife and his sister were arrested by the British Mandate power for their anti-Zionist and anti-mandate attitudes and activities. CANAAN spent over two months in prison, his wife nine months and his sister even four years. A more detailed account of CANAAN's political convictions and activities both as an individual and as president of the "Arab Medical Society of Palestine" is found in NASHEF's biography<sup>24</sup>. In the years to follow his internment CANAAN had no ethnographic work published, although a number of medical articles appeared in 1945/46. One reason for the silence certainly was that when in 1948 his house in Jerusalem was hit during the fighting between the Haganah and the Arab forces and his library looted he also lost "manuscripts of three books he had been preparing, and for which material had been collected over a long period of time"<sup>25</sup>.

This, however, was not the end of his ethnographic work. A second productive phase in researching and publishing Palestinian ethnography started in 1957 with the publication of several sometimes shorter contributions, which for the most part dealt with popular religious customs (1958; 1962a) and beliefs related to sacrifice (1957; 1962b), blood (1963) or death (1959).

#### CANAAN the collector

As much as he was an ethnographic researcher and author CANAAN was a devoted collector and documentor. He collected information on the heritage of his country and he collected objects related to popular belief and medicine. Between 1905 and 1947 he had acquired his collection of 1400 Palestinian amulets and had most of those specimens documented. This collection later was donated to Bir Zeit University by members of the CANAAN family.

A second collection of 230 specimens put together by CANAAN for Lord WELLCOME is in the Pitts River Museum at Oxford today. A third collection of Palestinian amulets had been collected by LYDIA EINSLER and is now in the Ethnographic Museum of Dresden<sup>26</sup>. Probably the largest part of his collection was a by-product of his work as a family doctor. As his daughter YASMA wrote

"There were very few doctors in practice at that time, and people were steeped in superstition and folk medicine. He noticed beads, the 'eye' and/or 'hand' amulets, and other jewellery his patients were wearing. He also noted how poor most of the patients were, and that even his modest fees were more than they could afford. So he decided that in lieu of payment he would ask to be told the history and purpose of whatever trinket the people were wearing and also asked for replicas. By this way he slowly built up a collection which became unique of its kind. In this manner he also collected proverbs and folk traditions"<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> MANTOURA 1998, 13.

<sup>24</sup> NASHEF 2002, 6–10.

<sup>25</sup> Y. CANAAN 1988, 149.

<sup>26</sup> HELMECKE 1986; 1989; 1998, 33–34. A biography of LYDIA EINSLER will be submitted by U. HÜBNER in a reasonable space of time.

<sup>27</sup> Y. CANAAN 1988, 151.

His daughter LEILA also recalls that

“It was through the polyclinic and his visits to outlying villages and hamlets, on horseback, carrying a bag full of medicines, that he noticed many women and men wearing amulets. After treating them, he would discuss with the patients what protection these amulets offered, which fired his interest in folklore and folk medicine. [...] On his return home he would immediately write down all the information obtained. Over the years he made friends with the village heads who supplied father with a lot of background information and bought amulets for him”<sup>28</sup>.

His collection was the focal point of most of his writings, in particular of his standard work on “Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel” (1914), where he published part of the collection. This book will continue to be a required reading for anybody interested in Near Eastern popular beliefs. According to his daughter LEILA<sup>29</sup> he “considered his collection his most important work and showed it to visitors with pride and devotion”. The immense significance of this collection of Palestinian Amulets with many objects which were already rare or disappearing at the time when CANAAN collected them has been aptly described by GISELA HELMECKE<sup>30</sup>: “Without his careful collection and notation these material objects would have been completely lost from the collective memory of the Palestinian people”.

To honour his achievements and present his collection to the Palestinian public an exhibition entitled “Ya kafi, ya shafi” was held from October 30<sup>th</sup>, 1998 to February 25<sup>th</sup>, 1999 in Bir Zeit University.

#### Intellectual Setting and Biblical Archaeology

The city of Jerusalem was the setting of CANAAN’s life and work. Around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century Jerusalem was in the focus of increasing interest from the part of Western theological missions, biblical scholars and biblical archaeologists. European and American research activities in “biblical lands” were continually increasing. It was the time when most of today’s important research schools and societies and institutes in Palestine were founded such as the “Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas” (“German Society for the Exploration of Palestine”) in 1877, under the auspices of which GOTTLIEB SCHUMACHER (1857–1925) worked as archaeologist. In 1898 the “Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft” (“German Oriental Society”) came into being. This society investigated the Capernaum synagogue and other synagogues in Galilee and later excavated *Tell es-Sultān*/ancient Jericho (1907–1909). In 1900 the “American Schools of Oriental Research” opened their first overseas institute in Jerusalem. The “Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes“ was established in 1902 with GUSTAF DALMAN (1855–1941) as its first director. The *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas* (ZDPV) started to appear in 1878, the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* (JPOS) in 1920. Archaeological activities in the “Holy Land” even increased after the 1917 British take-over of Jerusalem from the Ottomans who had been reluctant in issuing excavation permits to foreign missions<sup>31</sup>.

The foreign archaeological missions were disciples of the early school of biblical archaeology which through archaeological excavations and surveys intended to prove the correct-

<sup>28</sup> MANTOURA 1998, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Letter, quoted in HELMECKE 1998, 33.

<sup>30</sup> HELMECKE 1998, 29.

<sup>31</sup> KING 1983, 50.



ness of the Bible. Certain proponents and disciples of this school also were active adherents of Zionist expansion strategies involved in spreading such thought and propaganda<sup>32</sup>. The forerunner of the “American Schools of Oriental Research” was the “American Palestine Exploration Society” (APES) founded in 1870. In its constitution it was stated:

“The work proposed by the Palestine Exploration Society appeals to the religious sentiments alike of the Christian and the Jew [*sic!*]; it is of interest to the scholar in almost every branch of linguistic, historical, or physical investigation, but its supreme importance is for the illustration and defense of the Bible”<sup>33</sup>.

The “American Schools of Oriental Research” were consequently opened with the stated objective to “enable properly qualified persons to prosecute Biblical, linguistic, archaeological, historical and other kindred studies and researches under more favourable conditions than can be secured at a distance from the Holy Land”<sup>34</sup>.

The intellectual climate in Jerusalem at the time must have been a vivid and inspiring one. According to H. GUTHE<sup>35</sup>, the turn of the century also witnessed a slowly rising awareness among the local people in Palestine that research about their country would ultimately have to be done by themselves, although in general they would have lacked the academic background to do so. Thus CANAAN and few others such as ‘AREF EL-‘AREF (1936), or ‘OMAR EL-BARGHUTI (1922) were the protagonists of indigenous historical/ethnographic research.

TAWFĪQ CANAAN’s intellectual environment was shaped by a large number of well-known biblical scholars, archaeologists and others who certainly have been influencing his research and publications in the field of ethnography.

His daughter YASMA enumerates among the foreign scholars who were his friends the names of JAMES LESLIE STARKEY (1895–1938), who until he was murdered in 1938 led the excavations at Lachish (*Tell ed-Duwēr*), WILLIAM FOXWELL ALBRIGHT (1891–1971), NELSON GLUECK (1900–1971), KATHLEEN KENYON (1906–1978), ALBRECHT ALT (1883–1956), HANS WILHELM HERTZBERG (1895–1965), MARTIN NOTH (1902–1968)<sup>36</sup>, and HERMANN SCHNELLER (1893–1993)<sup>37</sup>.

His daughter LEILA adds the names of GUSTAF DALMAN and JUDAH L. MAGNES (1877–1948) from the Hebrew University<sup>38</sup>. This list of friends shows the wide range of different academic attitudes and approaches within biblical archaeology CANAAN had contact with. ALBRIGHT apparently was one of CANAAN’s close friends. In his obituary he remembered CANAAN’s “interest in everything and sympathy with all” and calls him “one of the most remarkable men” he had known whose “bright spirit has remained an undying source of inspiration to” him<sup>39</sup>. The two men first met in 1920, and ALBRIGHT subsequently became the editor of CANAAN’s book on “Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries” (1927a) and many of his articles, including one of his latest papers “Superstitions and Folklore about Bread” (1962c). In the 1920’s and 1930’s ALBRIGHT was one of the most influential personalities in the field

<sup>32</sup> IBRAHIM 1990, 7–12.

<sup>33</sup> KING 1983, 8.

<sup>34</sup> KING 1983, 27.

<sup>35</sup> GUTHE 1927, 90ff.

<sup>36</sup> Y. CANAAN 1988, 150.

<sup>37</sup> H. SCHNELLER 1949.

<sup>38</sup> MANTOURA 1998, 11.

<sup>39</sup> LAPP/ALBRIGHT 1964, 2–3.

of biblical archaeology. He was Director of the “American Schools of Oriental Research” in Jerusalem between the years 1919–1936, and he patronized a great number of biblical and Zionist scholars working expressly for the Jewish cause. Although prior to the foundation of the Jewish state in 1948 ALBRIGHT allegedly “favoured the formation of a binational Arab-Jewish state, after 1948 he supported the new Jewish state and continued his close friendship with [...] especially Israeli scholars”<sup>40</sup>. As a result his relationship with the Arab scholars suffered immensely.

ALBRIGHT was not the only of CANAAN’s friends who were working for Jewish interests in Palestine. NELSON GLUECK, also mentioned as one of CANAAN’s acquaintances, was an American Jew of ardent religious conviction, who had studied medicine in Berlin, Germany, and later became one of ALBRIGHT’s disciples. He came to Palestine in the late 1920’s when he worked with ALBRIGHT in *Tell Bēt Mirsim*. GLUECK was director of the “American Schools of Oriental Research” in Jerusalem from 1932–1933, 1936–1940, and 1942–1947<sup>41</sup>.

Yet, despite the Zionist influence guiding many of the contemporary biblical scholars working in Palestine, TAWFĪQ CANAAN was able to hold out and maintain his Palestinian identity. CANAAN’s ethnographic publications do certainly reflect the fact that his intellectual exchange was with biblical scholars rather than anthropologists. But they do also testify to a zeitgeist which albeit a dramatically aggravating political situation in Palestine would still allow for some dialogue between the religious and political parties.

One notion which can hardly be overstressed is CANAAN’s unbiased attitude towards other religions. In fact he never aimed at demonstrating superiority of one or the other religion. Discussing the belief in the female childbed demon *Qarīna* in his review of WINKLER’s “Salomo und die Karina” CANAAN not only cites Muslim traditions but also refers to Christian charms against this demon<sup>42</sup>.

That CANAAN was considered the expert on Palestinian ethnography by contemporary scholars of different religious and political background is evidenced by the fact that in 1929 he became one of the directors of the “Palestine Oriental Society”. JOSEPH LEVY, the Jerusalem correspondent to the *New York Times*, wrote “the three directors are, respectively, an Arab physician, who is the leading authority on the folklore of Palestine; a French Dominican Father, and a Jewish rabbi, who is also an eminent authority on Palestinian topography”<sup>43</sup>.

The biblical scholar with whom TAWFĪQ CANAAN shared many of his interests and research topics as well as the enthusiasm in meticulous recording of traditions was the German GUSTAF DALMAN. Their respective attitudes and scientific approaches resembled one another to some extent and differed in some aspects. For DALMAN theology was the starting point of his research and the Bible its base. He considered theology and Palestine studies as an entity, because the biblical history is rooted in the land of Palestine and cannot be understood if disconnected from its very base<sup>44</sup>. CANAAN agreed with him in this understanding but approached his subject from a broader and more ethnographic perspective, describing and interpreting aspects of Palestinian culture which more often than not are shared by all three religions of the country.

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<sup>40</sup> KING 1983, 235.

<sup>41</sup> KING 1983, 99.

<sup>42</sup> CANAAN 1931a, 134–136.

<sup>43</sup> KING 1983, 59.

<sup>44</sup> MÄNNCHEN 1996, 2.

Such difference in approach becomes apparent when taking a look at one of the themes which have been dealt with in publications of both scholars. DALMAN in volume VII of his "Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina" (1942) which is largely about the Palestinian house, dedicates a subchapter of his chapter on the household furniture to the treatment of lighting devices. CANAAN dedicated an article in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society* to the theme "Light and Darkness in Palestine Folklore" (1931b). Whereas DALMAN limits the discussion of this subject to showing parallels with biblical references, CANAAN does quote verses from the Bible, which is also one of his main literary sources, and from the Mishna. But he likewise quotes verses from the Qur'an, he refers to the classical Arabic literature and to Arabic idioms. Thus CANAAN succeeds in demonstrating aspects of cultural continuity for the Palestinian Arabs from ancient times into the present.

#### CANAAN'S Significance for Palestinian Ethnography and Cultural Identity

CANAAN'S publications are still of relevance for anybody working in the field of Near-Eastern ethnography. Although CANAAN had never been trained in anthropology or in doing ethnographic fieldwork, not only have many of his publications on popular belief systems, amulets and talismans to this day remained standard reference works<sup>45</sup>, but also he is quoted for an array of wide ranging subjects including traditional architecture<sup>46</sup>.

CANAAN probably was the first to give Palestine as a whole a "cultural identity". He studied the ethnography of Palestinians rather than of the Christian, Muslim, or Jewish inhabitants of the country. Moreover, as a result of his being well versed in both the Arab and the Western culture he in many ways acted as cultural ambassador of his country, an interpreter of Palestinian Customs and Traditions to the Western reader interested in the culture of the biblical land. In his publications he sometimes addresses his European readers *expressis verbis*, for example when he writes in his article about "Water and 'The Water of Life' in Palestinian Superstition": "Water has counted and still counts for more in the life of the Palestinian than in that of the European"<sup>47</sup>.

Although the manners and customs of Palestine and Jordan have since early times on drawn the interest of travellers, and residents in the "Holy Land" – some of them clearly with the sole objective to illustrate, document and prove the Bible, others such as LEONARD BAUER or HILMA GRANQUIST (1891–1972)<sup>48</sup> with a sincere interest in the ethnography of Palestine – CANAAN was the first Palestinian "ethnographer" to research the culture of his people unbiased by colonial objectives or approaches. He furthermore did research in hitherto little studied areas of Palestinian ethnography. As he once remarked, although "much has been written about Oriental folklore in general and Palestinian in particular the works on Arabic talismans and demonology are not numerous"<sup>49</sup>. His documentation of these aspects of ethnography has immensely contributed to the body of knowledge in this field and has prevented these traditions from falling into oblivion.

<sup>45</sup> MERSHEN 1982.

<sup>46</sup> VÖLGER/WELCK/HACKSTEIN 1987.

<sup>47</sup> CANAAN 1929c, 57.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. the many references to T. CANAAN in the works of GRANQUIST 1931, 23; 1935, 85.328 *passim*; 1947, 11.62–63 *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> CANAAN 1931a, 130.

One of the main objectives of this work was to assess the influence of the ancient Orient on the belief systems in Palestine. In his review of WINKLER's "Salomo und die Karina" (1931a) referring to WINKLER's chapter on the sources of the belief in the childbed demon he remarked: "If every department of oriental superstition and folklore could be treated in the same exhaustive way our knowledge of the influences of the ancient East on present ideas and practices would become more accurate"<sup>50</sup>. Towards the end of his life this concern becomes again evident in an article he wrote about Arab-Palestinian family life (1960), where he compares living or recent Palestinian traditions with what is known from Biblical accounts.

It seems that TAWFIQ CANAAN was aware of the particular significance of his documentation work and the fact that it actually was rescue and salvage ethnography, as he documented traditions already on the verge of vanishing at the time when he collected them. In the introduction to one of his latest works "Das Blut in den Sitten und im Aberglauben des palästinischen Arabers" CANAAN wrote: "Es muß von vorn herein gesagt werden, daß die alten Sitten und der alte Aberglaube im schnellen Verschwinden begriffen sind. Das meiste Material habe ich vor 25 Jahren gesammelt"<sup>51</sup>.

CANAAN has rendered great service to the Palestinian cultural heritage. Through collection and documentation of both its tangible and intangible aspects he has preserved Palestinian traditions as a foundation of cultural identity for future generations. He competently dealt with the entire array of historical ethnography, studying different aspects of material culture, as well as popular religion, documenting traditions and customs, and recording toponymy, proverbs, magical incantations and lexicographical information.

TAWFIQ CANAAN's continuing relevance may best be expressed in the words of VERA TAMARI, chairperson of "The Founding Committee for the Development of Cultural Heritage", Bir Zeit University, who wrote that through his work and his collection of Palestinian amulets, CANAAN "offers a complex scope of narrative data, re-anchoring the fragmented glimpses of the past, which we have so brutally lost, and thus shedding light on the issue of identity and assertion of historical and political rights"<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> CANAAN 1931a, 130.

<sup>51</sup> CANAAN 1963, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Y. CANAAN 1998, 148.

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