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Exploring the life of amulets in Palestine: from healing and protective remedies to the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets

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Citation
Garcia Probert, M. A. (2021, December 1). *Exploring the life of amulets in Palestine: from healing and protective remedies to the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3245902

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Exploring the Life of Amulets in Palestine

EXPLORING THE LIFE OF AMULETS IN PALESTINE

From healing and protective remedies to the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van rector magnificus prof.dr.ir. H.Bijl,
volgens besluit van het college voor promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 1 december 2021
klokke 11:15 uur

door

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geboren te Mexico Stad
in 1981

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Cover photo: amulets from the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.

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Acknowledgements

My supervisors, Dr. Petra M. Sijpesteijn and Dr. Salim Tamari, are the most important people to thank for making this thesis possible. Petra was always supportive and paid full attention to my work despite her teaching and research load. This is also true for Salim, who supported me since the first time I visited him at the IPS in Ramallah, and kept giving me advise despite of the long distance.

A big thanks goes to all the people who helped me during my fieldwork in the West Bank: the staff at Birzeit University Museum, specially to Ayman al-Shwaiki, Ziad Youssef, and Balqees Nakhlah for their patience in showing me the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets and granting me access to the amulets and help me photograph the objects. Thanks to Baha al-Jubeh, who always answered my questions about the use of amulets and the donation of the Canaan Collection, Dr. Aref Abu Rabia who shared with me important information about the culture of the Bedouins of the Negev. Thanks to the staff of the Institute for Palestine Studies at Ramallah. A special thanks to my friends in Palestine who shared with me a lot about their everyday life and made it easier for me to understand Palestine's culture: Bubu and Chris Alami, Ibrahim Issayed and his family, Muhammad Abu Jayyeb, Muhammad Wassef.

I also thank LUCIS, LIAS and LUF for having sponsored my fieldwork and other activities during my research. A special word of appreciation goes to Birte Kristiansen, who proofread and edited the text, and to my boyfriend Taco, who helped me to translate the summary into Dutch. A word of thanks would also go to my friends/colleagues Eftychia, Ale, Hayat, Mahmood, Tijmen, Sami, and Soraya for their constant encouragement though the years. Finally, this research would not have been possible without the support of my friends and housemates, and to my two (Mexican and Dutch) families, specially to my dad, my mom and Brooody.

This research was sponsored by Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACyT) and Secretaria de Educación Publica (SEP).

Introduction

The amulets of the *Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets* (T.C.C.P.A) have fulfilled multiple functions throughout their 'existence'; some simultaneously, others successively in relation to changing historical circumstances. From healing and protective devices as they were used when Taufiq Canaan[1] acquired them in the early 20th century, these amulets have gone through different moments in their life as objects. They have also been ethnographic evidence, collectibles, commodities, and became part of the national cultural heritage of the Palestinians in the 1990's. Acknowledging this multifaceted and multilayered life of the amulets forces researchers to see them in their engagement with different bodies through time and space, disclosing that amulets have not only been passive receptacles of meaning, but played a role in shaping cultural practices.

When I began my research on the Canaan amulets in 2015, it seemed to me that the objects in the T.C.C.P.A., nowadays kept in storage and displayed a few times,[2] had been decontextualised and deprived of their primary function (as healing and protective devices) when Taufiq Canaan collected them. It was my assumption that this "authentic" use of amulets had to be somehow rescued. However, after analysing Canaan's collecting process and his engagement with the amulets throughout his life, in parallel to his development as a scholar, collector and political activist, and after carrying out ethnographic research on how amulets are used nowadays, it became clear that the focus of this thesis should be different. There was no "authentic" or original use of amulets; they were simultaneously circulating as healing and protective remedies, collectibles, and ethnographic data among users, traders, antiquarians, ethnographers and folklorists. In this sense amulets had to be studied in relation to their use and function in particular settings, in the way they have been continuously re-contextualised. This flow of multiple rearrangements and re-contextualisations is linked to Canaan's medical, social, and political life, and his work as an ethnographer. In this thesis Taufiq Canaan works as the vehicle between these settings disclosing that his multifaceted character is present in his amulets.

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[1] Taufiq Canaan is the romanised way he wrote his name in his memoirs. Therefore, it is the way I will refer to him in the thesis. Other romanised transliterations that have been used are Tawfiq Canaan and Tawfik Canaan, the latter appears in the name of the Collection.

[2] A big selection of items was exhibited for the first time in 1998 in the exhibition: *Ya kafi, ya shafi... The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* Next to it, some objects have been on display in the University Library of Birzeit University as part of an itinerant display. Finally, in 2017 a group of object was selected to be part of the inaugural exhibition Jerusalem Lives (Tahya al-Quds) of the Palestinian Museum. Cfr. http://www.palmuseum.org See chapter 5 for a detailed discussion of the (effects of) exhibitions of the amulets.

Although the thesis takes its rationale from the T.C.C.P.A., it does not revolve around the Collection as a unit, neither does it only deal with its formation and development. Rather, it reconstructs the amulets' uses and functions through different moments in time, before and after they became part of the Collection. Because the thesis focuses on the amulets rather than on the collection, it also addresses amulets in other repositories, as well as the amulets' trajectories before being collected. Paying attention to the changes in the amulets' systemic background, helps to understand how they were used in the time period under scope, from early 20th century when they began to be collected until the 1990's when they were exhibited.

This thesis contributes to the general study of amulets by adding other dimensions to the objects, which have been studied for their magical, medical, and religious functions alone. It considers amulets as objects that go through different phases in life, that move across settings and circulate in different networks. It also reflects on the way we continue to capture them under the same, sometimes misleading heading "amulet", despite the fact that they have different functions.

i. Mal de ojo,[3] limpias,[4] and amulets in Palestine

Since I was an undergraduate student at the Art History program in the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana, I have always been curious about how we perceive, interact, give meaning to the world, and how through our interaction the world has an effect on us. My curiosity began while studying modern and contemporary art. Back in the early 20th century many artists were already placing objects in museums and questioning their culturally assumed nature. Among them was Magritte's famous *La Trahison des images* where the depiction of a pipe of tobacco is accompanied by the caption *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* reflecting on the distance between objects, their visual representation, and their semantic reference in words; Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, a porcelain urinal set in an uncommon position and placed in a context alien to it, is another example. These kind of art works awakened in me the interest of exploring material culture.

As for my interest in Palestinian amulets and my decision to dedicate my PhD research to it, it probably relates to my cultural background and my personal upbringing. On the one hand, Palestine through its resistance and emblematic figure Yasser Arafat became next to Che Guevara and other revolutionary leaders part of the imagery of the student movement in Latin America

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[3] *Mal de ojo* can be translated as evil eye.

[4] *Limpias* refer to ritual cleansing procedures in which the practitioner of traditional medicine (brujo or shaman) cleanses the client from all kinds of evil affections. *Limpias* are widely carried out in Mexico.



Figure 1. *La Trahison des images*, 1929. René Magritte
Photo taken from Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treachery_of_Images

during the 1960's. My family was part of that generation, and introduced me to the Palestinian cause from a very young age and taught me the value of taking sides with people oppressed, vulnerable and deprived of opportunities. On the other hand, my interest in amulets, and the ritual practices related to them are deeply connected to the widespread belief of *mal de ojo* in Mexico, the use of amulets and the performance of healing procedures. In Mexico as in Palestine, these practices have been accumulative and contain pre-colonial elements. Resemblances in the use of amulets and healing rituals in these different latitudes are many as I have witnessed during my last visits to Mexico where I carried out research on *limpias* and amulets in Oaxaca. However, despite the similarities in functionality, amulets respond to the history and development of healing practices in each region.

When I was preparing my PhD research proposal, I came across the T.C.C.P.A., which caught my attention due to the kinds of objects in it.[5] It did not take long to find out that it had barely been studied. While examining it, I ended up questioning the way the objects have been presented all these years as a collection of Palestinian amulets. Focusing on how the amulets have

[5] For the complete list of materials see Table 1 in the Appendix B

been subjected to one particular reading led me to the idea of exploring them in other possible contexts. In the field of visual arts in general, and in my study of contemporary art in particular, research has shown that new meanings open up when we focus on materiality. Shifting attention to the objects and the way we engage with them as they appear to us, led me to be more sensitive to their agentive quality. So even though we are used to engage with objects in one particular way, we need to develop the habit to question their usual context to realise all the possibilities that they can offer.

ii. Research question

Framing amulets as objects that have a life and whose biographies encompass different phases, how did the different uses and functions of the objects in the T.C.C.P.A. before, during and after being collected, articulate with each other and with Taufiq Canaan's own life phases within the historical development of Palestine? In other words, how can we understand the biographies of the amulets, and how have these been impacted by their historical context including: everyday religiosity, colonisation, collecting processes, commercial exploitation, and nationalism? In answering my research question I consider processes of contextualisation as continuous.

After analysing Canaan's writings, collecting process, and the development of the Collection after it was unpacked and exhibited, I identified four contexts of interaction with the amulets that are important in their life cycle. The following questions address these contexts per chapter. Chapter 1: How have the terms amulet and talisman developed in academic research? Chapter 2: How were the amulets used as healing and protective remedies in a context of an *agrarian religion*[6]? Chapter 3: What was their socio-political function in a context of ethnographic interest and research, and how were they used as ethnographic data? Chapter 4: how were the amulets commoditised as medico-religious remedies and collectibles? Chapter 5: how did the amulets, while keeping their use as protective and healing remedies, ethnographic data, and collectibles, articulate a discourse on cultural heritage of Palestine? Finally, answered in the conclusion, how do all these uses and functions stand next to each other as latent qualities of the amulets?

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[6] Agrarian religion is a term elaborated by James Grehan in his work The Twilight of the Saints. "As much as urban as it was rural, it was the expression of the entire social and economic order whose rhythms were tied to the slow turning of seasons and the vagaries of the earth, sky and environment. The consequences of this lifestyle were far reaching, and profoundly shaped cultural conditions and psychological reactions across the whole population. Religion bore all the marks of this overarching agrarian order, catering to its needs and vulnerabilities, its struggles and setbacks, its fears and fantasies." See J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints. Everyday Religion in Ottoman Syria and Palestine*, p.16

iii. About the sources

This study takes into account a variety of sources that include material, textual and oral sources. The material sources are the amulets. The textual sources provide perspectives of the existing views on the different aspects of amulets. Some of them consider amulets as palliative medicaments, apotropaic objects, and recipients of blessings. Other sources typically rely on objects that had been gathered as ethnographic evidence, thus they explain amulets within the framework of magical thinking of the people who used them. Sources also include studies on amulets in contemporary settings and highlight their commercial aspect and circulation. By including a wide spectrum of sources I have tried to explore as many different viewpoints as possible in an attempt to apply different approaches to the phenomenon of amulets, and to compare these approaches to the amulet users' perspective. Next to written sources I have included oral accounts. They are less stable than written texts, which explains why scholars have been interested in recording the intangible aspect of cultural heritage. Scholars have written down folk stories and sayings, leading to the problem of standardising and freezing a lively and continuously-changing aspect of culture. The oral sources used in this thesis are based in the interviews I carried out during my fieldwork in Palestine. The different groups of sources are described below.

1. The amulets

The material objects nowadays in the T.C.C.P.A. at Birzeit University (BZU) constitute the first and main group of sources of this thesis. However, my material sources also include amulets in other collections. These are 1. the collection made by Lydia Einsler (currently in the Museum of Folklore in Dresden); 2. the collection made by Taufiq Canaan for Henry Wellcome (first sent to the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum and later relocated to the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford); 3. the Widad K. Kawar Arab Heritage Collection of Palestinian Dress (currently in Amman, Jordan); 4. some items from the Collections of the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen; 5. some of the amulets of Ohan, the antiquarian that appears in Canaan's records and is mentioned in Chapter 4; 6. contemporary amulets that are still in use among the bedouins such as those studied by Aref Abu Rabia (some from his personal collection, others exhibited permanently at the Bedouin Museum of the Negev); and 7. amulets used by the relatives of some of my interviewees, from towns and villages in the West Bank. All these amulets share similarities regarding materials, shapes and use, and the networks in which they all have circulated.

The T.C.C.P.A. alone comprises 1379 items,[7] which show a diversity in shapes, materials and in the way they were used. The materials used are paper, metal, glass, wood, fruits, seeds and stones.[8] Some amulets are inscribed or contain iconography, others do not have any visible human intervention (they are neither inscribed nor carved). According to Canaan's records most artefacts he collected belonged to Muslims, the rest to Christians and Jews. This distinction however, does not exclude the fact that many amulets were used regardless the religious denomination.[9] Canaan got the amulets from the following cities, towns and villages in the Levant: Jerusalem, Nablus, Hebron, Gaza, Lifta, Bethlehem, Nabi Musa, Nazareth, Jaffa, Beersheba, Tiberias, Ein Karem, Auja al-Hafir, Sur Baher, Artas, Isawiya, al-Nabi Samuel, Jericho, Mar Saba, Silwan, Sharafat, Beit Sahour, Qalunya, al-Tur, al-Qubayba, Bait Iksa, Beituniya, Ramallah, al-Bireh, Birzeit, al-Ludd, al-Jura, Sheikh Nuran, al-Shuyukh, Jenin, al-Ramla, Beit Surik, Beit Hanina, Beit Safafa, al-Khidr, Amman, Damascus, Aleppo and Beirut; and a few from Egypt, Mecca, Yemen, Iran and Germany. These locations do not always indicate the place where the amulets were made, sometimes they refer to the place they were bought by the users, or collected by Canaan.

The T.C.C.P.A. is very valuable because of the diverse material it contains, and the documentation that Canaan carried out of each item in it. It is so unique because Canaan collected the materials himself, kept records about the circumstances under which each item was acquired, and used these items as the main source for his publications. The Collection thus contains the objects themselves, Canaan's notes about how and when the amulets were acquired, and his interpretations. Moreover, it is a collection that comprises amulets used by ordinary people from towns and rural areas. Khaled Nashef from his introductory study to the Collection's catalogue says, "it reflects, the popular beliefs related to occult practices in the first half of the 20th century… they are a material proof of the way a traditional society dealt with things and events not probable within the religious framework."[10]

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[7] The numbering of the items in the catalogue is not precise. The numbers jump from 1153 to 1254, making it look like there are 1480 items, while in fact the total number of items is 1379. However, the numbers used in this thesis are exactly the ones given in Canaan's catalogue.

[8] The entire list of materials can bee seen in Table 1 in the Appendixes.

[9] Examples of amulets used by all religious communities are explored in Chapter 2.

[10] K. Nashef. trans. *Majmū'a tawfīq kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ tawfīq kan'ān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished., p.3

2. The documentation of the amulets

The second group of sources comprises all the documentation of the material objects. It includes first of all, Canaan's handwritten notes on the cardboards on which he attached all the amulets. These notes in English, German, Arabic and Romanised Arabic (Arabic written in Latin characters), originally accompanied each amulet giving hints about their materials, usage and owners. In the late 1990's after the donation of the amulets and their exhibition in the BZU Museum, the objects were detached from the cardboards and mixed, some were not re-attached properly, making the links between some objects and their respective notes difficult to track. Next to the cardboards, Canaan documented the amulets in a more systematic way in the catalogue he prepared, which seems to have been based on his cardboard notes. The catalogue written by hand in German with Romanised Arabic terms, contains more systematic information about the objects; for many amulets the catalogue offers metadata that is not included on the cardboards. This German catalogue is precisely what was used to describe the objects on display when the collection was the subject of the exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* in 1998.

The documentation also includes the catalogue's translation into Arabic prepared by Khaled Nashef. This translation shows an exhaustive study of Canaan's notes and ethnographic work, and is useful as it links Canaan's description of the amulets (not always in Arabic) to the way Palestinians referred to them, their materials and the illnesses they meant to cure. This translation into Arabic has been useful because it has also given me the tools to locate the materials and objects in a contemporary context, and investigate through my interviewees the way their forefathers used them back in the early 20th century when Canaan collected them. Finally, the documentation provided by Canaan and Nashef has served as the basis for the digital catalogue of the BZU Museum.[11]

3. Studies on Palestine folklore

The third group of sources comprises studies on Palestine folklore. The largest group of studies is authored by Canaan, who in parallel with his collecting activity wrote extensively about the many and different components of religious beliefs and practices in the countryside,[12] and explained at

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[11] V. Tamari, "Tawfik Canaan - Collectioneur par excellence: The Story Behind the Palestinian Amulet Collection at Birzeit University", p.70

[12] The complete list of works of Dr. Canaan can be found in the bibliography of this thesis.

times the way amulets were linked to beliefs and other practices, giving specific examples and making allusion to concrete items he had collected. His observations, carefully translated into a detailed analysis of the inner mechanics of Palestine folklore, offer a wide panorama of the diversity and the complexity of elements involved in the religious life of the peasants. They also show the very particular attitude and concern that he had towards the undermining of folk culture; a preoccupation that can be seen in Canaan's works and in those authored by other Palestinian intellectuals of his closest circle.[13]

Folklore studies were embedded in a conceptual framework of essentialist and reductionist assumptions about peasant's beliefs and customs, and included biblical parallelisms brought to Palestine by foreign scholars in the field of Biblical Studies, who attempted to show the "living Bible" in the norms and material culture of the peasantry.[14] Even though Canaan —and other Palestinian scholars such as Stephan and Haddad— was complicit in presenting folklore in biblical terms, he gradually changed his approach to the Palestinian peasantry proposing the bases of a native ethnography. By producing an ethnographic corpus rich in empirical data, and by experiencing the effects of colonisation, Canaan's ethnography gradually gave agency to the peasantry.

Canaan's writings on folklore, primarily in English and German, targeted a European audience which included the Mandate political elite and Western scholars in the fields of medicine, history, anthropology and archaeology. However, it was not until the 1970's when studies on folklore were considered a valuable asset of cultural resistance, that Palestinian scholars became aware of the richness of his work, and started translating most of his articles into Arabic. Salim Tamari has highlighted that such translations and studies about Canaan's work are very often uncritical; his writings have been mostly read through the lens of nationhood, preventing his works to be understood as a cultural phenomenon of scientific endeavour and awareness in the context in which they were produced.[15]

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[13] Canaan's circle is identified as a group of Palestinian Arabs: Khalil Totah, Omar Saleh al-Barghouti, Stephan Hanna Stephan, Elias Haddad, that were amateur ethnographers and carried out ethnographical work based in empirical data; their works were mainly published in the Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society, JPOS, from 1920 to 1948. They did not formally constitute as a group or school but shared the same concerns about the undermining of native culture in Palestine. Cfr. S. Tamari, "Lepers, Lunatics and Saints: The Nativist Ethnography of Tawfiq Canaan and his Jerusalem Circle." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 20 (2004): 24-43.

[14] S. Tamari, "Lepers, Lunatics and Saints", p.35

[15] S. Tamari, "Problems on Social Science Research in Palestine: An Overview." *Current Sociology* 42 (1994): 69-86

Next to Canaan's studies on folklore, other sources include the studies on folktales and sayings by Palestinian Arab scholars; the comparative studies on popular beliefs and practices of the Muslim world; the studies on magic, divination and the occult in Muslim societies. A detailed literature review on amulets can be seen in Chapter 1.

4. The interviews

The fourth group of sources consists of oral accounts from inhabitants of villages and towns that I visited during my fieldwork trips to the West Bank in Spring and Autumn 2015, Spring 2016 and Summer 2017. The accounts come from inhabitants of Jerusalem, Ramallah, al-Bireh, Bil'in, Nabi Musa, Nablus, Zababdeh, and Sir.[16] These accounts come first of all from formal interviews that I conducted and recorded, and secondly from countless more informal and short conversations. Among the formal interviews, some were open aiming to find out about the use of amulets in general, others were more detailed and revolved around particular amulets. All these conversations provided a lot of valuable information.

Some of the information I obtained about particular amulets came from the museographers at the BZU Museum who shared information about the use of particular amulets among their relatives and acquaintances.[17] Another interesting way I got information about the amulets was through showing my interviewees photos of the amulets under scope. Based on the photos, my interviewees were able to tell me whether or not the objects were familiar to them. This exercise not only provided data about the familiarity people had with certain amulets, but also disclosed the attitudes that nowadays prevail among Palestine's inhabitants. As a result of this ethnographic exercise, I realised how important it was to consider the attitudes of the people in telling the story of the amulets. The use interviews for this thesis aimed to track some information about the amulets used in the first half of the 20th century. Most of my interviewees did not live during that time or were very young, but their accounts about their parents and grandparents is what helped me to visualise the use of amulets by real people. Since I was able to ask questions, the interviews showed that each experience and account of it was different, that every individual had something to add about their experience, something that did not always happened by reading Canaan's notes and academic articles on Palestine's folklore.

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[16] Sir is a village next to Zababdeh, in the northern part of the West Bank.

[17] For an interesting passage about the current use of amulets, see the Conclusion.

iv. Literature review - Studies on the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets

The T.C.C.P.A. is an amazing repository of objects that were used as amulets in Palestine in the early 20th century. It is a unique collection that not only contains the largest number of Palestinian amulets collected by one single person worldwide, but also includes the documentation of each one of them. Moreover, the kinds of objects in it are not commonly found in other collections of amulets, which mainly contain amulets from elite groups and amulets that are fully inscribed with Qur'anic text or contain elements that link them to practices of divination and magic.[18] Rather, the collection that Taufiq Canaan formed includes objects used in the everyday religious practice of the peasants, the nomads and the townspeople of Palestine, that range from very simple objects taken from the natural landscape to objects made with elaborated techniques that make use of materials in a very distinctive way.

The T.C.C.P.A. has barely been studied despite the fact that Taufiq Canaan's works on Palestinian folklore have been widely used.[19] The main reason for this is the fact that the Collection was hidden for almost 50 years, and while Canaan's publications kept circulating after he died, his collection was somehow forgotten. It is surprising, however, that although the Collection has been open to the public since the mid 1990's, and it is the largest collection of amulets and talismans from the Levant, the only studies on it are: Vera Tamari's *Tawfik Canaan - Collectioneur par excellence: The Story Behind the Palestinian Amulet Collection at Birzeit University*[20]*;* Khaled Nashef´s introduction to the unpublished Arabic translation of the Collection's catalogue[21]; Baha al-Jubeh´s paper *Magic and Talismans. The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*[22]*;* and the short contributions to the catalogue/booklet of the Collection's first exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*.[23] Other publications about the figure of

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18 E. Savage Smith, (ed.) *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*. London: Ashgate/Varorium, 2004.

19 References to Canaan's works appear in the writings of scholars who focus on magic in the Muslim world, amulets and talismans, Palestine's folklore, and social history of Palestine, such as E. Savage Smith; P. Lorry; C. Coulon; P. Bourmaud; S. Tamari; among many others.

20 V. Tamari, "Tawfik Canaan - Collectioneur par excellence: The Story Behind the Palestinian Amulet Collection at Birzeit University" in *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, edited by Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwartz, 71-90. England: Ashgate, 2012.

21 *Majmū'a Tawfīq Kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kan'ān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished.

22 B. al-Jubeh, "Magic and Talismans. The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 22-23 (2005): 103-108.

23 K. Nashef, edit. *Yā Kāfī, Yā Shāfī, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* Palestine: Birzeit University Publications, 1998

Taufiq Canaan deal more with his biographical details than with the collection itself; reason why they are not included here, but they are used in Chapter 3, which deals with Taufiq Canaan's life and collecting activity.

Research on the T.C.C.P.A. started after the donation of the items to the BZU Museum in 1995, but more specifically within the frame of its first exhibition: *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* in 1998.[24] The exhibition catalogue contains short contributions by the people involved in its organisation, including staff from the Museum and relatives of Canaan. Gisela Helmeke, who in 1998 was guest researcher at BZU and worked as head curator of this exhibition, addressed the collection as ethnographic material and presented the collection as scientific evidence of popular medical practices. By organising the material based on Taufiq Canaan's analytical categories, Helmeke put forward the scientific aim of Taufiq Canaan's collecting activity. Other contributions in the catalogue addressed the exhibition and the collection as part of Palestine's cultural heritage, in tune with the discourse on national identity, further explored in Chapter 5.

Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi set the framework for the study of the T.C.C.P.A. in two directions, on the one hand through its items and on the other hand through the documentation/written sources. The documentation has been explored by Khaled Nashef, who was then researcher at the Birzeit University Institute of Archaeology. His contribution includes the introductory notes to the Collection's catalogue prepared in Arabic in 1998 under the title: *Majmūʻa tawfīq kanʻān li l-hujub, makhṭūṭa bi khaṭṭ tawfīq kanʻān,* which has not been published and is only available at the BZU Museum. Nashef´s work complements and deepens the information on the identity of the people involved in Canaan's collecting activity, the relation Canaan had with them, and the places where the items were obtained. He also brings forward many references to Canaan's articles where he referred to specific amulets. In sum, Nashef offers a historical and social background of Canaan's social network in which his collecting project took place.

The approach to the T.C.C.P.A. through its items has been done by Baha al-Jubeh, who was the museographer of BZU Museum when the amulets were donated, and also during the exhibition. With a background in museum and collection studies al-Jubeh was responsible for setting the categories to classify the items and making them accessible to the public through the Virtual Gallery of the BZU Museum, an open-access digital database that contains photos of all the items.[25] His

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[24] Besides this exhibition, few items have been exhibited in the Library of Birzeit University. A few other items were part of the exhibition *Jerusalem Lives (Tahya al-Quds)*, at the Palestinian Museum in 2017.

[25] http://museum.birzeit.edu/collections/tawfiq-canaan-amulets; http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu

contribution to the study of the T.C.C.P.A. also includes the paper *Magic and Talismans.* In it, he analyses a selection of inscribed items by using analytical tools that come from Taufiq Canaan's published work: *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans.* Al-Jubeh's analysis, however, only focuses on inscribed amulets, which amount to less than half of the items. Beyond the analysis of the inscriptions he neither deals with how these talismans were used, nor problematises the issue of magic, which he uses as the theoretical framework to understand the talismanic inscriptions. Interesting to see is that al-Jubeh's article was published when a sort of revival of the study of magic took place in academia. In fact the year of its publication, 2005, is one year after the re-issuing of Taufiq Canaan's *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans* in the book *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, in 2004 by one of the eminent scholars in the field, Emilie Savage-Smith.

Among more recent studies about the T.C.C.P.A. is Vera Tamari's "Tawfik Canaan - Collectioneur par excellence: The Story Behind the Palestinian Amulet Collection at Birzeit University". Published in 2012, it revolves around collecting practices, and it is part of a wider movement on museum and collection studies. Tamari's paper explores the social and ideological background in different phases of the Collection, and it is useful as it problematises collecting practices and the construction of meaning within collections' narratives. It reconsiders Taufiq Canaan's motivations, and the Collection's main purpose against the prevailing ideas of the Collection as representative of a Palestinian heritage. Her paper opens a door for reflecting upon collection formation, but it does not deal with the different stages in Canaan's collecting activity, neither does it analyse the Collection in the context of emergent collecting practices in early 20th-century Palestine. She revises the category of "Palestinian", but does not reflect on the category of "amulet". Furthermore, Tamari's idea of the disassociation between Canaan's collecting activity, and any kind of national sentiment requires further exploration because since the late 19th century we can see expressions of a nascent Palestinian identity, and Taufiq Canaan an example of it.

Although these previously mentioned studies are valuable inasmuch as they set the ground for the study of Canaan's collection, they do not provide an in-depth analysis neither of the process of formation and historical development of the T.C.C.P.A.; nor of the items and the ways they were apprehended/understood/conceptualised during this long process. A reason of this gap is that the methodologies for the study of material culture and collections is relatively new in the West Bank,

therefore their latter application to Arab collections.[26] Another reason is that attention has been paid to collections that are constantly on display in museums, which are more accessible than those that are exhibited in a temporary basis. Moreover, research on private collections located in the West Bank, such as the T.C.C.P.A. and other smaller collections, is difficult mainly because of the Israeli surveillance and the systematic erasure of Palestinian culture. By providing the first in depth, book length study to the T.C.C.P.A. this thesis aims to fill this gap, and lay the foundation for future research on the diverse material the Collection has.

v. Theoretical framework(s)

This thesis uses theories that have explored things, objects and materiality. As explained before, the main aim of this thesis is to give insights into how amulets' uses and functions change and articulate with each other through their life. Focusing on the objects collected by Taufiq Canaan, this thesis revolves around the different phases amulets in Palestine had throughout the 20th century, from their use as magical, medical and religious remedies for protection and healing, to their exhibition as part of Palestine's cultural heritage in the 1990's when they were made public.

The thesis also reflects on how, through these different phases, amulets had agency. They were not passively used and given by meaning by people. The way amulets were used and circulated show us how they actually were part of the formation of professions, cultural practices and national identities. Reflecting on such an agency demands a focus on the materiality of objects, i.e., on their physical features such as shape and material in relation to human activity. In sum, the thesis explores amulets as objects in different phases, not only their function and symbolism, but also on what they have done to people.[27]

Since the thesis explores different phases and aspects of the amulets, the theoretical framework is diverse. For the overall approach, I use Appadurai's and Kopytoff's cultural biography of things to analyse the function and agency. In Chapter 2, I explore amulets as

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[26] During my fieldwork in the West Bank I learn that museum and collection studies was relatively new. However, Palestinian institutions are investing in this field, and nowadays there are some recognised scholars working for Palestinian Museums doing incredible work. Cfr. S. Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwartz, edit. *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World.* England: Ashgate, 2012. Cfr. M. Volait, *Antique Dealing and Creative Reuse in Cairo and Damascus 1850-1890: Intercultural Engagements with Architecture and Craft in the Age of Travel and Reform*, Leiden: Brill, 2021.

[27] C. Knappett and L. Malafouris, *Material Agency Towards a Non-anthropocentric Approach*, Berlin: Springer, 2008; E. Yalouri, "Matter Matters Matter: Development in Material Cultural Studies Since the 1980's," in *Social Matter(s); Anthropological Approaches to Materiality*, edited by T. Bampilis and P. ter Keurs, p. 32-33; C. van Eck, M. J. Versluys and P. ter Keurs, "The biography of cultures: styles, objects and agency" *Cahiers de l'École du Louvre* 7 (2015)

protective means and healing remedies, and I use theories of embodiment to analyse how amulets' function is defined by the way users engage with them through bodily interactions; for Chapter 3 on amulets as collectibles I draw on collection studies; in Chapter 4, as I explore the aspect of commoditisation of amulets, I use the biography of things and theories about commoditisation; and in Chapter 5 on Palestinian amulets/cultural heritage, I focus on collection theory including identity formation and narrative construction. The pertinence of each theoretical framework and its applicability to the contents is discussed at the beginning of each chapter.

1. Life of things and their biographies

The theoretical framework for the overall thesis comes from Appadurai's and Kopytoff's works on the life and biography of things. According to them, in a fluid way things move through different temporal and spatial contexts from the moment of their manufacture until the moment they are disposed, and destroyed. Things acquire different values and functions as they become part of meaning-making processes. Kopytoff has formulated the idea of things having a life, and as such being capable of accumulating a set of biographies.[28] Like people, who go through many stages in life, perform different activities and move in multiple networks, things go through phases functioning in different systems. These stages sometimes merge with others in a fluid way, making it pointless to seek strict boundaries between them. Moreover, like people, things are subjected to have many biographies, each one emphasising one or another aspect of their being (historical, political, economic, etc.) In a cultural biography, we explore the possibilities of things in time and space. We can trace their origin, the way they develop a career, and the expectations posed on them throughout their career. Because the way an object should or should not be used is determined also by its age, by its deterioration.[29]

Using Kopykoff theoretical framework, in this thesis I aim to analyse the Canaan amulets in different phases to trace their multiple functions. Although they are treated as amulets all through the thesis, the chapters deconstruct the phases they go through. First, I explore the amulets' "original" dimension when they were part of medical/magical/religious practices. Then, I move on to how amulets entered the ethnographic world as scientific evidence for the study of the "other", the past, and the folklore of Palestine, while simultaneously becoming commodities and circulating

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[28] A. Appadurai, *The Social Life of Things,* p.34

[29] Although Kopytoff's study slaves, their objectification and commoditisation place them in a similar status to things. I. Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditisation as Process", p.67

as collectibles. Lastly, I explore the amulets as part of the discourse of cultural heritage where they have been defined as "Palestinian" amulets. Although the phases somehow relate to a chronological development, each function does not make the previous superfluous, on the contrary, they constantly overlap.

2. The agency of objects.

So far, exploring things from a biographic perspective helps to understand how the objects' meaning is produced in different contexts. However, this theoretical framework still considers that things are subsumed to the subjects as primary agents. In order to shift our attention from the objects as passively becoming containers of meaning, to the way they actually participate in meaning making processes, is necessary to recognise that objects are technological agents that interact with people and act upon them. In other words, objects affect people's routines and cultural practices. This shift to the agency of objects requires a reflection on their material aspect.

According to B. Brown's Thing Theory,[30] when *objects* are deprived of their object-ness or they stop functioning as they were originally intended, they can be theoretically considered as *things*. The *thing-ness* of objects can only be glimpsed or theoretically understood because "things lie beyond phenomenal perception."[31] Meaning that *objects* cannot stop being objects regardless of their function because they are always meaningful, and this meaningfulness only occurs through our interpretative attention. This difference can be exemplified by what in computer jargon is called a *bricked phone*. Think about an electronic device such as a mobile phone that has been designed to be used in a particular way through its system and apps. When the phone does not longer function due to misconfiguration, physical damage, corrupted hardware or hardware unable to be updated, it becomes as technologically useful as a brick.[32] The reference of a bricked phone points to its thing-ness, by suggesting that the damage is such that the phone is considered to be dead. It can be stored, accumulate dust and degrade from its lack of use. Or in different circumstances, it can become a museum object to be exhibited due to its aesthetic value or what it represents, but not due to its original use. A very similar situation happened to the amulets that Canaan collected once they were stored in the drawers of the BZU Museum, and exhibited a couple of times.

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[30] B. Brown, "Thing Theory." *Critical Inquiry* 28, no.1, Things (Autumn, 2001):1-22.

[31] B. Brown, *Op. Cit.* p.6

[32] Cfr. "Brick (electronics)" in Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brick_(electronics)

By accessing things or shifting the attention to the thing-ness, we could argue that a close-up look occurs though their physical qualities: material, colour, size, shape, and any sort of index that hints at the way it was employed. The aim of analysing objects through their materiality, is to see them as things, devoid of assumptions and fixed associated functions, allowing their material qualities (as separated from function) to determine our interpretation. The description and study of the objects comes from examining the materiality only.

Considering objects as things discloses that things refer less to an object than to a particular object-subject relation.[33] In other words, objects are in their engagement with humans and also with other objects. According to B. Brown, "modernity has artificially made an ontological distinction between inanimate objects and human subjects, whereas in fact the world is full of "quasi-objects" and "quasi-subjects."[34] Within this distinction, objects have been obscured by the subject: the individual, the human, the only capable of having agency.[35] The aim of reflecting on the relation between people and the material world is to put forward that objects, and in this case amulets, are not only repositories of human history but also active agents that have affected and contributed to the development of historical processes. In their many phases, amulets are in their engagement with manufacturers, users, traders, collectors, and folklorists.

vi. Methodology

Although ethnographic objects form a gate to approach and understand a culture, it is quite difficult to interpret them without the proper documentation that ethnographic research offer. This is especially true for objects from a different culture and time. With no data about the material, ethnographic objects become only things, useful for contemplation as artistic objects but not as valuable material for scientific study.[36] To our luck, the T.C.C.P.A. was well documented from the very beginning by Taufiq Canaan and subsequently by Khaled Nashef.

The first time I accessed the T.C.C.P.A. was virtually through the BZU Museum's Virtual Gallery. It was possible to find pictures of all the amulets, however, not all with very good quality.

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[33] B. Brown, *Op. Cit*., p.4

[34] B. Brown, *Op. Cit.*, p.12

[35] Baudrillard says: "we have lived off the splendour of the subject and the poverty of the object", Cfr. Bill Brown, *Op. Cit*., p.8.

[36] C. S. Fowler and D. D. Fowler, "Formation Processes of Ethnographic Collections. Examples from the Great Basin of Western North America" in *Learning from Things, Method and Theory of Material Culture Studies*, edit. W. David Kingery, Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996, p.131.

During my first fieldwork trip, I made a photographic archive of the amulets. I had the chance to see them, touch them and think about their features as signs conveying messages of how they had been used. This was the moment when I realised I was dealing with a very unique collection that not only contains inscribed amulets, but also amulets that bear no inscription, and even amulets that look like if they had been put in the Collection directly from nature.[37] So far, the amulets I had studied and the studies I had read all related to inscribed amulets; particularly in the case of amulets used by Muslims, they either contained Qur'anic references or magical inscriptions based on the knowledge of letters and their numeric valency, etc. However, this was not the case for the T.C.C.P.A., which contained much more than inscribed amulets. With a large number of uninscribed items in the Collection, I started looking for signs that could reveal the way they had been used. Any scratch, hole, or crack, could give an indication of how the objects had been used, stored, treated or gotten damaged over the years. It was only after this first encounter with the objects that I had access to the catalogue in German and its Arabic translation, which I compared carefully to my own observations and notes. From it I could draw information about materials and the terms used to refer to each amulet. Using the catalogue, I made tables of materials to see which were the most used and how they were used, pure or in combination with other materials. From the analysis of this data I found out that particular combinations of materials appeared repeatedly. Having become familiar with the material, I started expanding the documentation of the amulets with all Canaan's writings, and with writings of other scholars. In order to complement this documentation, I carried out the interviews and got information about the amulets, the way some were used, the way they are remembered, and the way people nowadays engage with similar amulets or with amulets that contain the same materials.

Simultaneously, while going through Canaan's writings I started mapping how he collected the amulets. In other words, the relation between the amulets he acquired and his writings year by year. Throughout his life, I traced periods when his collecting activity increased and decreased, so I decided to link the life of the amulets with Canaan's. So, in this thesis the amulets' life unfolds in connexion to Canaan's activities.

[37] Amulets with organic materials such a twigs, flowers, and seeds.

vii. Taufiq Canaan

This thesis revolves mainly around the amulets that Taufiq Canaan collected from 1905 until 1947[38]. It also explores the relation between Canaan's collecting activity with his development as a scholar, public figure and political activist, reflected in his written works. By exploring his collecting in relation to his life, we can reconstruct the people he interacted with, the places he visited, and the networks he was a part of and thus the ways by which the amulets came into his possession. The forms of obtention disclose the amulets' many and simultaneous uses and their socio-political function. What follows is a short biography of Canaan, to make it easier for th reader to grasp the amulets' life and circulation. The five chapters explore different aspects of Canaan's life in more detail and provide specific context for the amulets in each phase.

Taufiq Canaan was a prominent physician, anthropologist and collector whose work has been of great importance for many academic fields. He is an example of the Palestinian professionals who, not related to any traditional family of notables, benefited from Western education and culture introduced by the Protestant mission that had started settling in Palestine since the 1830's. His education plus his ability to forge social relations gave Canaan access to many circles.

Taufiq Canaan (September 24, 1882 – January 5, 1964) was born into a protestant family in Beit Jala, a village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. His father, Bishara Canaan (ca. 1850 – 1899), became part of the German Protestant Mission's activity, was the first Arab Lutheran Pastor in the Near East and founder of the Lutheran church in Beit Jala[39]. Taufiq, like his father, attended the Schneller School in Jerusalem, –also known as the Syrian Orphanage, one of the many institutions founded by the German mission. Afterwards, Taufiq studied medicine in Beirut at the Syrian Protestant College founded by the American Protestant Mission, later becoming the American University of Beirut, from which he graduated in 1905. After graduation he returned to Jerusalem to work in the German Deaconesses Hospital and in the "Jesus-Hilfe" Lepers' Asylum where he met important German physicians. In 1912, 1913, 1914 and 1922 he travelled to Germany to specialise

[38] Although the catalogue indicates that the earliest amulets were collected in 1910, Canaan mentions having gathered the first items since 1905. Cfr. Table 2 in the Appendixes.

[39] U. Huebner and B. Mershen "Tawfiq Canaan and His Contribution to the Ethnography of Palestine", p.251; T. Canaan, "The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs. Part I."



Figure 2. Taufiq Canaan and his wife Margot Eilander
Jerusalem 1912
Photo credit: Birzeit University Archive

in tropical diseases, bacteriology and microscopy.[40] After his return, he was appointed at important positions in the International Health Bureau in Jerusalem and in the Arab General Hospital.

Next to his medical career, Canaan cultivated a keen interest in the history and archaeology of Palestine motivating him to dedicate a few years to absorb the contemporary trends in Biblical Studies. He joined the American School of Oriental Research and followed closely the

[40] U. Huebner and B. Mershen, *Op. Cit*., p. 252

investigations of scholars such as the prominent anthropologist Gustaf Dalman (1855-1941)[41]; Albrecht Alt (1883-1956) and Martin Noth (1902-1968) who influenced him in his approach to the study of folklore in Palestine.[42] Taufiq Canaan carried out research on Palestine's folklore and published extensively in academic journals. Next to his writings he collected a substantial amount of objects, books, amulets, and icons. From all what he collected, only his collection of amulets and icons survived the Israeli occupation of West Jerusalem in 1948. All Canaan's other possessions got destroyed in the war.

Next to his medical and anthropological work, Canaan was a public intellectual involved in many associations such as the Alumni Association of the Syrian Protestant College, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Jerusalem Arab Medical Association, the Palestine Arab Medical Association, and the Palestine Oriental Society (POS). Through his membership in these associations, he came in contact with important political figures, some of whom actually collaborated in the formation of his collection. Canaan's involvement in the political life of the country became more evident after 1936 after publishing his political pamphlets.

An overview of Canaan as medical doctor, anthropologist, folklore scholar, collector, and political activist discloses how amulets in Palestine circulated in different networks. Those that he collected were linked to these different aspects of his work. It is because of Canaan's multifaceted life that amulets can be apprehended as part of these phases, not only as extensions or parts of Canaan's networks, but also as phases that the amulets actually had.

viii. Chapter Structure

This thesis is divided in five chapters. Except from the first chapter, the rest evolve in a chronological way. I have decided to follow this order because it reproduces the way amulets have circulated through time and space, which helps to understand the accumulative load that they have gathered from the time they were used by the inhabitants of early 20th century Palestine, to the way they are used today. This chronological order, however, should not mislead us from the fact that the different uses and functions have overlapped through the time period under scope. Moreover, this order challenges the way we naturally engage with objects beginning from the present; at the very

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[41] First head of The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, Research Unit of the German Archaeological Institute (*Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes) Cfr.* K. Nashef, "Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works." Translated by Khalil Sleibi. *Majallat ad-Dirasat al-Filastiniya* 50 (2002): 69-91.

[42] K. Nashef, "Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works", p.16

moment of the encounter with an object we give meaning to it according to our own immediateness. It is only after this first encounter that we, as opening a Matryoshka doll, start going through the layers that have been formed over the object, setting them aside and exploring them one by one.

Chapter 1 explores the term amulet and the often-used term talisman as an interchangeable synonym. As a reflective exercise of the historicity of our analytical categories, it questions the usefulness of the English terms *amulet* and *talisman* when analysing the objects used in Palestine, particularly contrasting them with *emic* references that appear in Taufiq Canaan's notes and those of other collectors and anthropologists contemporaries to him who delved into the same sort of material. The chapter is divided into two parts. First, it explores how magic as the conceptual framework of amulets and talismans, has erased the possibility of other interpretations. It then turns to the conceptualisation of amulets and talismans from the Levant in the work of 19th-century and early 20th-century scholars whose approach developed during colonial times and got shaped by what has become known as Orientalism. The chapter then turns to more recent approaches of the study of amulets that come from material culture studies, reflecting on the feasibility of applying analytical tools for the study of the T.C.C.P.A.. The second part of the chapter revolves around Taufiq Canaan's use of the concepts amulet and talisman. It analyses a selection of his writings that focuses on amulets, as well as his fieldwork notes where he discussed the ways these objects were referred to by their users.

Chapter 2 revolves around the first function that was attached to the amulets, that of healing and protective devices. The chapter explores the historical context of the use of amulets as such particularly among Palestine's rural population. It analyses the elements of the common cosmology that framed the manufacture and use of the amulets that are nowadays in the T.C.C.P.A. The chapter also advances the proposition that multipurpose and mixed-material amulets responded to the complexity of people's cosmology, which is the reason why biomedicine could not replace their use. The chapter ends by reflecting on how amulets can adapt and adjust to new social conditions and the changes over time as a result of an every-day religiosity.

Chapter 3 analyses the processes that led to consider amulets as collectables. By focusing on the development of ethnographic research and colonial practices of collecting, this chapter explores the formation of a mentality in which specific (ethnographic) objects became worthy of being included in collections. The chapter also delves into the overlap of uses in a colonial context. In other words, it analyses how while operating as collectibles for some, amulets kept functioning as healing and protective objects for others, disclosing that autochthonous practices were not passively

erased and replaced, but had to be negotiated. The chapter starts with a short historical description of the arrival of the Christian missionaries, the foundation of their institutes and their role in the transformation of the Jerusalemite urban milieu where Canaan developed as a physician and ethnographer. Then, it explores the revival of the Holy Land and the rising ethnographical interests that led to the formation of a generation of collectors. Finally, the chapter focuses on the articulation of three aspects of Canaan's collecting activity: acquisition of amulets, networks, and political engagement. The different ways Canaan acquired the amulets show the networks that he built throughout his life. As time passed, these networks changed in parallel to his gradual involvement into the political life of his country.

Chapter 4 revolves around the commoditisation of amulets. Even though Chapter 3 already explores the growth of amulets as collectibles (a form of commoditisation), this chapter focus on how bought, sold, and exchanged, amulets were valuable goods that circulated in public and private networks. Framed in the first half of the 20th century, the chapter analyses the ways amulets were commoditised prior to and in parallel with Canaan's acquisition of his collection. Next to the networks established by collectors, these objects had been circulating as healing and protective remedies within families, the local markets, and the pilgrimage sites for a long time. The chapter also explores the effects of foreign tourism to Jerusalem, the role of foreign scholars and travellers in the creation of new commercial networks with specialised antiques' shops that traded folklore objects including clothes and amulets. Finally, the chapter analyses the effects of these networks on new forms of consumption in which peasants, bedouin and townsmen operated.

Chapter 5 revolves around the conceptualisation of the Canaan amulets as a "Palestinian Collection of Amulets" soon after they were donated to BZU in 1995. Peeling off the layers of meaning added over the years, I start with the most recent stage of the Collection, which according to the chronological limits set in this thesis is the current exhibition of some items in the BZU Library. Peeling off the layers of meaning added over the years, I go from the inception of the T.C.C.P.A. through the collecting activities of Taufiq Canaan and his work on the collection as a collector-cum-ethnographer. In the first part of the chapter, I analyse the process of naming the collection in 1995 and the way amulets were addressed in the exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* in 1998. Based on my correspondence with members of the exhibition committee, as well as by analysing the catalogue, reports and reviews of the exhibition, this chapter explores the message this exhibition aimed to convey. The chapter then moves on to how the amulets have been catalogued and approached after the exhibition. Since these approaches refer over and over to the time of the

Collection's formation, the second part of the chapter aims to trace how Taufiq Canaan approached the amulets as Palestine's material culture and as cultural heritage of his country. This second part shows that the Palestinian-ness of the objects is not merely a product of the 1990's. Rather, it is based on Canaan's own experience that developed throughout his life. Since the chapter touches upon how the formation of national identity is intimately connected with collecting, displaying and exhibiting material culture of the past, it also includes Taufiq Canaan's political views and considerations on the Palestinian-ness of the material he collected.

Finally, a conclusion in which I will summarise my answer to the research question: "How did the different uses and functions of the Canaan amulets before, during and after being collected articulate with each other and with Taufiq Canaan's own intellectual development within the historical development of Palestine?

ix. About the transliteration

This thesis contains many terms in Arabic. The transliteration of most terms has been done following the system used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies (IJMES) for Modern Standard Arabic. However, in a few cases, such as the name of particular amulets, when pronunciation is key locating them in a contemporary context, transliteration has been done in the colloquial form.[43] In these cases, a footnote is added giving its MSA correspondence. Arabic terms mentioned for the first time, are given with their corresponding forms in singular and plural in a footnote. Consecutive mentions appear in singular or plural according to their placement in the sentence. *Ta' marbūṭa* at the end of a word is transliterated as "a", or as "at" in cased of an *iẓāfa*. Proper names are written as they occur in the English dictionary. Names of towns and villages in Palestine have not been transliterated, but use the English spelling of the platform PalestineRemebered.com and *All That Remains.*[44]

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[43]Among transliterations of colloquial Arabic is Taufiq Canaan's transliteration proposed for the dialect of the Bedouins of Petra (Wadi Musa), based on previous studies such as Musil, A., *Arabia Petrea*, II, Edom, 1917; Dalman, G., *Petra und seine Felsheilgtumer*, 1908; Bruennow und Domaszewski, Provincia Arabia, Vol. I; the works of the Dominican Fathers: Jaussen, Savignac, Lagrange, and Vincent's articles written in the Revue Biblique; among other works. Cfr. T. Canaan, *Topography and Folklore of Petra*, p.1

[44] Khalidi, Walid. *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948.* Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992

Letter	IJMES
ء	’
ا	ā / a
ب	b
ت	t
ة	a / at
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
ه	h
و	w; ū / u
ي	y; ī / i

Chapter 1. What is an amulet?

1.1. Outline

In 1995, after the donation of the T.C.C.P.A. to BZU, a reordering of the material took place. The 1379 objects of different shapes, materials, some with inscriptions, some without and used for different purposes in different contexts, were labeled and put under one single category: "Palestinian amulets". While the term amulet seems to have included diverse kinds of objects, the objects themselves got restricted to their function as amulets, especially under the premises of being part of a "collection of Palestinian amulets." But, have they always been amulets, or better said, Palestinian amulets? Rather than being a universal connotation, I argue that our use of the concept of amulet, applied to the objects that Canaan collected, must be seen in its historicity. It is a general concept that has been used to describe material objects that have specificities. As any other concept, it has been subjected to our perception and knowledge of the world, which has changed considerably from the time Taufiq Canaan gathered the objects in the early 20th century, to current research, especially after the material turn of the 1990's.

The category of amulet is applied to objects that have been used as a means to protect from evil and misfortune, to avert and heal disease, and to bring good luck. The kinds of power that amulets bear and the ways they convey such power to the users are diverse. As analysed in the following chapters, even if we agree that these objects were produced as amulets, they could take subsequent roles, which have not always incorporated in the word "amulet" and not generally understood to be part of amulets. Objects made with the purpose to be amulets are not only used as such, they enter and exit contexts in which they function in multiple ways. These functions vary, and we see they take the form of commodities, ethnographic evidence, collectibles and tokens of national identity.

This chapter explores the term amulet and talisman, and the reason why they sometimes have been used as interchangeable synonyms. It supposes a reflective exercise on the historicity of our analytical categories, and the mechanisms behind the conceptualisation of objects as amulets and talismans. It enquires into the usefulness of the English terms *amulet* and *talisman* when analysing the objects used in Palestine, particularly contrasting them with *emic* references that come from ethnographic research such as those provided by Taufiq Canaan.

This chapter is divided in two parts. In the first, the chapter explores the conceptualisation of amulets as magical objects, and how the magical framework has erased the possibility to see them operating in other functions. It looks into amulets and talismans from the Levant and their conceptualisation in the work of 19th-century and early 20th-century scholars. It then addresses more recent approaches to amulets resulting from the material turn focusing on materiality and reflects on the feasibility of applying recent analytical tools on the T.C.C.P.A. The second part of the chapter revolves around Taufiq Canaan's use of the terms amulet and talisman. Although his work fits into the anthropological studies about Palestine at large scale in the early 20th century, it is at the same time noteworthy because of the way he carried out ethnographic research. This section analyses the writings where he explicitly dealt with amulets, either in a descriptive way or by providing analytical tools to study them.

1.2. Amulets as magical objects

Magic has been the main and immediate explanatory framework in the study of amulets and talismans to the extent that it has erased the possibility of objects to display other capacities.[45] This is because the study of amulets and talismans has focused on the way they are used, but not on the way they are commercialised, collected and exhibited. And within the context of their use, magic has taken over and has left the religious and medical use far behind. However, definitional boundaries are perhaps clear, but in reality this position is not useful when it comes to analysing amulets used in an everyday religious practice. In her study of the role of magic in contemporary the Gulf States, Remke Kruk observes that the boundaries between the realms, magic and religion, are so blurred that "neither the practitioner nor the clients, those who seek his aid, are aware of going beyond the boundaries of what is permitted."[46] Practitioners and users may recur to elements that come from the domain of magic, which is most of the times forbidden or restricted. If this is the case in practice, how can we as scholars get rid of the artificial boundaries that limit our understanding of the amulets? So before I answer this question, I will first examine why the language of magic has dominated the study of amulets.

Since the late 19th century, with the advent of anthropology and the study of religion, magic became an explanatory framework for practices characterised for their automatic ritual efficacy,

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[45] R. Muravchick, *God is the Best Guardian*, p. 52

[46] R. Kruk, "Harry Potter in the Gulf: Contemporary Islam and the Occult." p. 48

which by extension were understood as non-Christian.[47] The terms amulet and talisman therefore were used with reference to the European experience of magic.[48] Within the colonial context, magic was embedded with orientalist ideas of the other and it was used as an *etic* concept that functioned as a global designator of ritual practices carried out by peoples under European dominion. It was argued, as formulated according to well-known prejudices, that colonised peoples incapable of developing complex, rational and religious thinking were in need of colonial domination.

Magic was used as an explanatory category to distinguish a mode of engagement with the supernatural or divine, opposed to the religious. This differentiation has its origin in the time of the Reformation, that took place in Western Europe between 1400 and 1700 CE. In this period religious reforms aimed to re-shape, re-form and re-define the core of Christian faith and practice.[49] Based on Western, particularly Protestant norms,[50] this reformation meant the establishment of clear boundaries between the sacred and the profane, and the elimination of any kind of magical elements from religious practice.[51]

In colonial settings, the magical and the religious were considered two ontological qualities of modes of thinking that emanate from two different kinds of peoples. While the religious was reserved for Western European Christian rituals, the magical was used to define most practices of the indigenous population of the colonised regions even including Eastern Christians such as those living in Palestine. This differentiation was useful for the European Christian missions inasmuch as it legitimised their activities through institutions, which sought to introduce a new form of religiosity and spread values and codes of European origin.

1.3. Islamic amulets

Reformation as a project that sought to depurate religion from any kind of magical element and popular practice, also took place in the Islamic world. Although since the medieval period we find

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[47] J. Sørensen, "Magic Reconsidered. Towards a Scientifically Valid Concept of Magic" in *Defining Magic: A Reader*, edit. Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Strausberg, p. 230

[48] Mostly with reference to the European experience of magic, i.e., with regard to the invocation of forces other than God; employing concepts such as ghosts and witchcraft; and involving dichotomies such as black vs white magic, learned vs popular, prayers vs spells; which have little or no counterpart in Islam. Cfr. E. Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination in Early Islam,* p. xiii

[49] M. McGuire, *Lived Religion, Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*. p.22

[50] M. McGuire, *Op.Cit*. p.11

[51] M. McGuire, *Op.Cit.,* p.33

scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) proposing reformational ideas, it is in the 19th century that the Islamic world thoroughly experienced a reformational movement in which the legal discourse became the arbiter and determiner of the theoretical object of "Islam" through the jurists.[52]. Reformational efforts took place through the intellectual activity of Muslim scholars who had been trained in Europe and got acquainted with the Western conceptualisation of religion, such as Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905) and Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-1897). For them, the consideration, regulation and legitimation of behaviour and religious practice had to be based on the Qur'an and Hadith. It excluded all non-textual sources, literary sources, and local Muslim traditions, which had for centuries, been important sources of customs and culture. This textual interpretation of Islam endorsed the authority of the jurists, who belonging to the four juridical schools, read and interpreted the texts while leaving out many other authorities such as local sheikhs, tribal leaders, philosophers, Sufis and poets, who in Shahab Ahmed's words represented: "the human and historical phenomenon of Islam".[53] Reformist scholars in this sense set the guidelines for assuring the correct practice of Islam differentiating it from popular practices. These guidelines set by the scholars did not reach the entire population, but spread in urban centres where state institutions could provide infrastructure and a regulation of Islamic practice. Beliefs and expressions of piety in everyday life were only considered Islamic if they were based on the textual sources. Everything else coming from sources other than the Qur'an and the Sunna, such as popular practices, saint venerations and foreign manners imported by Western missionaries, were labeled innovation (*bid'a pl. bida'*), thus rejected in the strongest terms.

In the 19th century, travellers and missionaries who settled in many parts of the Muslim world got acquainted with this Muslim normative discourse prevailing in urban centres, which had defined the understanding of religion at the level of the elite scholars. Reformist ideas within the Islamic world made it easier for European scholars to study the Islamic world with categories such as religion vs magic, elite culture vs popular culture, pure vs polluted, etc.

This understanding of "Islamic" turned out to be decisive also in defining Western collecting practices. Only material objects that fitted within the label "Islamic" were included in collections of Islamic arts. These repositories in turn, led to the first Western studies on the material culture from the Islamic world like the *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte,* published in 1925; Titus Burckhardt's publications starting in the 1940's, and *L'Islam et l'art musulman* by Alexandre Papadopoulo in

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[52] S. Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, p.117

[53] S. Ahmed, *Op .Cit.*, p.123

1976.[54] The material analysed came primarily from archaeological sites in the Near East (the Levant & Mesopotamia), and from what missionaries, travellers and scholars had collected during fieldwork stays. The material was organised around topics or around historic periods of 'Islamic history", a predominantly Arab/Muslim history.[55] The focus of these studies was on Islamic architecture and on objects related to it, such as tiles (ceramic works), mosque lamps and stained-glass windows (glass works), minbars (wooden work), etc. As for every-day life objects, they were placed under the "minor arts" section. Even so, they focused entirely on examples drawn from elite culture, and showed no interest in everyday objects from middle and lower classes. Amulets and talismans were also included in collections but only those containing "Islamic" elements, most of which belonged to the elite culture. Example of this are the inscribed seals that are nowadays part of the collections of the British Museum.[56]

What is Islamic about these objects? What did the collectors mean by "Islamic" when they labelled them as such? Within the Islamic cosmology, magic is a reality and the amulets to counteract it are accepted by religious authorities. However, amulets had to fulfil certain guidelines, i.e., they had to be made and used in accordance to the Qur'an and the Hadith. In this sense, Qur'anic quotes were the easiest way to recognise an amulet as Islamic, and so those were included in collections. Amulets that did not contain Qur'anic inscriptions or were used according to he Prophet's sayings, were left out from the category. They were not included in collections, and therefore, not studied.

Over time, the study of the Islamic world developed alongside different understandings of the concept "Islamic". The study of Muslim local cultures as representatives of the diversity of the Islamic world, the inclusion of the "popular" aspect of Islam, and the application of ethnographic research methods, contributed to broaden the categories of Islamic.[57] It has been particularly the ethnographic research derived from the anthropological approach to Islam, which has allowed us to better understand the material culture in its engagement with individuals and communities in specific contexts. Moreover, the study of material culture has also contributed to the study of

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[54] T. Burckhardt, Art of Islam: Language and Meaning. London: Islamic Festival Trust, 1976.; O. Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art", p. 5

[55] O. Grabar, *Op. Cit.*., p. 4

[56] V. Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals in the British Museum,* p.131

[57] S. Ahmed discusses the development of terms in the study of the Islamic world. Cfr. S. Ahmed *What is Islam? The importance of Being Islamic.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Islamic objects by shifting the attention to the materiality of objects and their perfomative aspect. Example of this is the approach to the Qur'anic contents in amulets. There are indeed particular verses recurrently used in amulets for their power such as *ayat al-kursī* (the Throne verse), or stories such as *ahl al-kahf* (the people of the cave). Scholars now know that these verses are not always engraved or written, rather, they can be pronounced while manufacturing or activating the power of the amulet, recited and even ingested as prescribed by the practitioner.[58] Finally, another development that has contributed to category of Islamic is the study and conceptualisation of religion, from viewing religions as separate entities with exclusive beliefs, practices and symbols, to a fluid and connected view in which religions share elements with each other and overlap.[59]

1.4. Definitions and terminology

In the same way the development of the study of material culture has allowed new kinds of objects to enter the category of Islamic amulets, the analytical tools to study them have developed alongside the material culture of the Islamic world. Many of the first amulets that entered collections were only described in general terms as objects belonging to a certain period of Islamic history. It was only when scholars started consulting sources in Arabic (and other languages used in the Islamic world) that they started finding how amulets were referred to in the texts and how they were used. Moreover, ethnographic research gave a more nuanced understanding of the different terms. Scholars doing fieldwork were able to register the ways people referred to the amulets in their own languages and dialects. In sum, terms became more accurate as they relied on more diverse material provided by textual sources and ethnographic data.

1.4.1. Amulet and talisman

One of the first scholars who studied amulets was E.A. Wallis Budge, who worked in the British Museum from 1883 until his resignation in 1924. His definitions came from analysing the objects that had been catalogued as amulets in the Museum's collections, as well as the objects from his own collection. In his work *Amulets and Superstition,*[60] Budge analyses amulets and talismans from

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[58] This performative aspect is explored in Chapter 2. For the material and perforative aspect of the Qur'an Cfr. Zadeh, Travis. "Touching and Ingesting: Early Debates over the Material Qur'an." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 129, no. 3 (2009): 443-466.

[59] The discussion of religions as separate or connected comes in Chapter 2, in the subchapter about interconfessionality.

[60] W. Budge, *Amulets and Superstition*. London: Oxford University Press, 1930

different time periods and geographies as the material expression of superstitions, a phenomenon that appeared to be common to many Eastern cultures. Although his work does not deal exclusively with material culture from the Islamic world, it does include reflexions on objects from Muslim lands. In his work he distinguishes between an amulet and a talisman and mentions that although the terms had been used interchangeably they actually seem to refer to two different functions of objects. [61]

Budge's differentiation of the terms points to the object's purpose and intention. On the one hand, "an amulet is an object which is endowed with magical powers, and which of its own accord uses these powers ceaselessly on behalf of the person who carries it, or causes it to be laid up in his house, or attaches it to some one of his possessions, to protect him and his belongings from the attacks of evil spirits or from the evil eye."[62] On the other hand, a talisman is only intended to perform one specific task. Therefore it has to be made to cover the needs of the user. In this way, the talisman bears power from the moment it is manufactured, but it expires once the talisman has fulfilled its function.[63] So while an amulet bears a protective power which serves for general and continuous protection, a talisman is only intended to perform one specific task.[64]

Another more recent distinction of the terms has been made by Emilie Savage Smith and used by Venetia Porter in the analysis of amulets in the collections of the British Museum. Accordingly, amulets are objects with small dimensions manufactured to be worn to ensure protection and well-being. They have long-lasting materials in order to function over a long period of time. On the contrary, talismans are made with ephemeral materials such as paper, and although they are made for the same purposes, they have a short-term function.[65] Following this definition, it is not possible to use the terms interchangeably since they refer to different functions.

A distinction between amulets and talismans, however, is even more complicated when analysing material that has been decontextualised in time and place, such as material that has been re-arranged in the form of a collection and transferred to a different spatial context. Based on the biographical analysis to objects mentioned in the introduction, I argue that an object used as a

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[61] E. Savage-Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p. xxii

[62] W. Budge, *Amulets and Superstition*, p.13

[63] W. Budge, *Op. Cit*., p.13

[64] W. Budge, *Op. Cit.,* p.14

[65] V. Porter, *Arabic and Persian Seals and Amulets in the British Museum*, p.131

talisman at one moment of its life can end up being re-used as an amulet in a different context. Sometimes it is difficult to assess whether an object was intended to be an amulet or a talisman if there is lack of documentation. And even when documentation is available we encounter another problem; the evaluation of an object as an amulet or a talisman is not so easy when we analyse the objects according to the way they are named locally. The *emic* terms sometimes refer to the way they were used, and challenge the material-based distinction in which objects with long lasting materials such as stone, metal, or glass are regarded as amulets, while objects made from paper and organic materials such as leafs, flowers, and fruits, are considered talismans.

1.4.2. Arabic terms

Arabic terms used to refer to amulet and talisman have been explored in the Encyclopaedia of Islam. In the article of the entry "amulet" C. Hamès offers the following definition that derives from the study of amulets in the Islamic world, which although very general, helps us to identify aspects/ elements that can be applied to the Canaan amulets. An amulet Hamès says:

> "an object that one wears, with the conviction that it possesses beneficial magic… connoted by the word *ḥamala* and its derivatives *ḥimāla, ḥamīla, ḥamā'il*, is perhaps defined from the point of view of anthropology of magic, by the fact of wearing an object with magical powers by attaching or suspending it. It is generally intended for human beings but can also be suspended around the neck or head of an animal or hung from a building or vehicle. In the Muslim world, these objects serve to support and encase the magical texts written in Arabic, inspired by a particular reading of the Qur'an or by written magical traditions. The texts and inscriptions constitute the talismans, which are the actively magical element; whereas the amulet constitutes the particular instrument of application."[66]

Following this definition two things can be said. On the one hand a talisman needs an amulet since it serves as its means for conveying the magical element of the talisman. On the other hand, an amulet needs to be worn, hung, or attached to the object of its protection. An amulet then requires to be placed in contact with the user or whatever it is meant to protect. This contact or the act of carrying an amulet, is what lies at the core of Hamès definition.

In the Arabic language however, amulets are not only referred to as *ḥamala* and its derivatives, other terms used in written sources have been equated to the terms: amulet/talisman.

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[66] C. Hamès, "Amulet", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson. Consulted online on 01 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_SIM_0219>

The first one *ṭilsam,*[67] *ṭilsim*, *ṭilism* or *ṭilasm* is derived from the greek *telesma* (τέλεσμα), and can in fact be traced to the same origins as the English word "talisman". It appears in Arabic translations of Greek texts, but is hardly ever used in the Palestinian context for everyday amulets and talismans. Another term is *tamīma*[68]*,* that comes from the verbal root *tamma* which in its various forms II, IV, X, means to complete and to be achieved. *Tamīma* is mentioned in pre-Islamic poetry alongside with *taʿwīdh.* Lisan al-Arab mentions that *tamīma is an 'ūdha* hung on a person.[69] According to H. Wehr, *taʿwīdh and 'ūdha* means amulet, talisman, but also refers to a charm, spell or incantation.[70] The root of this term in its form II *ʿawwadha* means to pronounce a charm or incantation, to fortify someone with a charm, but also to place someone under God's protection by praying. Another term which, according to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, is to be found in the writings of the 10th century author Abu Dulaf al-Khazraji is *ḥirz* which means amulet, but also has been used to refer to a fortified place, refuge, sanctuary.[71] The verbal root of this term is *ḥaraza,* it means to keep, guard, protect, to take care of. Another term which appears in Arabic literature, specifically in *ḥadīth* and consequently in the Medicine of the Prophet (*al-ṭibb al-nabawī)* literature is *ruqya*[72] which according to H. Wehr refers to a spell, charm, magic, incantation, exorcism; but whose meaning in the context of *ḥadīth* refers to specific formulae in which God is the ultimate force from which refuge is sought. Oral sources show that nowadays people use terms in the different Arabic dialects, such as *ḥurz* in the Maghrib, *ḥijāb* in Egypt and in the Levant[73]; *ḥimāla*, *ḥāfiẓ*, *'ūdha*, *mi'wadha* in the Mashriq. Another term used to denominate a certain design of a talisman is *jadwal* (table or chart) or a *khātim* (seal)*,* which are geometrical figures that bear

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[67] J. Ruska, Carra de Vaux, B. and Bosworth, C.E., "Tilsam", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7553>

[68] *tamīma* pl. *tamāʾim. Cfr. T.* Fahd, "Tamīma", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_7383>

69 *Lisan al-Arab*, p.448

70 *taʿwīdh* pl. *taʿāwīdh. Cfr.* H. Wehr, *Dictionary,* p.768

71 *ḥirz* pl. *aḥrāz Cfr.* H. Wehr, *Dictionary*, p.196

[72] *ruqya* pl. *ruqan Cfr.* T. Fahd, "Ruḳya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6333>

[73] J. Chelhod, "Ḥidjāb", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 01 August 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2855>

inscribed names and signs with magical powers and which appear sometimes on pendants, but are also prepared on pieces of paper to be folded and kept in an amulet case.

1.4.3. Palestinian use of the terms

In Palestine the term *ḥijāb* is used to refer in general to amulets and talismans of diverse kinds. It is the term that in the 90's Khaled Nashef used for the Arabic edition he prepared of Canaan's catalogue of the T.C.C.P.A.: *Majmū'a tawfīq kan'ān li l-ḥujub.* Using the term *ḥijāb* to designate so many different kinds of objects might be explained by the fact that it was the most widespread term in use in Palestine for decades, and because Dr. Canaan himself used it in his research as a general term that included both inscribed and uninscribed amulets. In most cases, however, *ḥijāb* has a specific meaning and refers to a paper amulet with "secret writing", folded in a triangular shape and wrapped in a leather or fabric pouch. (See Figure 3) According to Salim Tamari, in Palestine people also use the term *ṭalṭamīs*[74], which seems to derive from the term talisman. It means "gibberish"



Figure 3. Paper *ḥijābāt* (folded and kept in leather, cloth or metal pouches). Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

[74] *ṭalṭamees* or *ṭalṭamīs*

and refers to this unintelligible/secret writing seen by the viewer who is unable to decipher the meaning of the inscription on a *ḥijāb.*[75]

A *ḥijāb* is hung making it visible, but we can also find examples attached to the inner clothes. It has been so commonly used, that the term also entered the vocabulary of traditional embroidery. In that context, *ḥijāb* is the triangular-shape motif used in Palestinian traditional attire. It is embroidered for decorative purposes in many different colours and in different arrangements, sometimes the motif stands alone or it is combined with other motifs. The motif is meant to protect the woman who wears the dress, and probably to indicate that the woman is also carrying an actual paper *ḥijāb* in between her clothes.[76]

P. Bourmaud, in his study on the medical practices in Late Ottoman Palestine also reflects on the term and shows how, even before the 20th century, the term *ḥijāb* was already in use. It was meant to designate manufactured objects that usually contained invocations, such as the names of God, particularly those corresponding to the desired healing power such as *yā kāfī* and *yā shafī*.[77] These objects were often manufactured or prepared by sheikhs,[78] but they were also manufactured by the users themselves since they had common knowledge on how to prepare remedies. Besides the use of the term in historical sources, Bourmaud gives an interpretation based on its etymology. "Le *ḥijāb* recèle une part de prière, de mise en scène, de secret, mais aussi d'autorité et de technicité dans l'écriture." [79]

Etymologically, this term comes from the verbal root *ḥajaba* which means to cover, conceal, and hide from sight.[80] Used in the context of an amulet, it conceals part of the ritual, which actually activates the power of the object. An object becomes a *ḥijāb* through the ritual action of the prayer,

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[75] *ḥijāb (pl. ḥijābāt/ ḥujub)* Personal communication with Salim Tamari. 17 October, 2020

[76] In the Palestinian traditional attire, the protection against evil eye is achieved by embroidering the triangular shaped "amulet" pattern, by recurring to certain colours, or by making a "mistake" in the patterns, on which a stitch with a different colour is sawn in order to deviate the attention of anyone who sees the woman. Figure 4. shows one of the dresses I investigated while documenting objects from the Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Collections in 2017. This is a festive dress from Beit Dajan embroidered with different patterns, among them the "amulet" pattern, which resembles the triangular shape of the paper amulets.

[77] This formula is used in amulets to address God. The item catalogued under number 1 of the Canaan Collection is an amulet with an inscribed gold coin it reads: *yā kāfī, yā shafī, yā ḥāfīdh, yā amīn. The same formula also appears* in the Nabi Musa amulets in which Prophet Musa is invoked. More about the Nabi Musa amulets, see Chapter 4.

[78] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p.78

[79] P. Bourmaud, *Op.Cit.*, p.78

[80] H. Wehr, *Dictionary*, p.184



Figure 4. “amulet” (*ḥijāb)* embroidery pattern on dress from Beit Dajan.
Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen Collections.
Photo credit: NMVW

by activating its powers through the writing or invocation of a formula during its preparation. A *ḥijāb* conceals the authority of the manufacturer and his role in the activation of the amulet. At the same time, it protects the user (carrier of the object) from any sort of evil by covering or hiding him/her from the sight of any source of the evil eye. At times a *ḥijāb* is used hidden within the clothes or folded in a pouch, but it can also be used by exposing it on the clothes with the aim to deviate the attention of the source of the evil eye. The concealment of a *ḥijāb* can be expanded as well to the way an object hides multiple and simultaneous functions that co-exist throughout the life

stages, such as the Canaan objects, which were also medical remedies, commodities, ethnographic data, collectibles, and part of the national heritage.

1.5 From magical objects to small blessings

Attention to the material qualities of the amulets has shifted from deciphering the inscriptions to observing how the object is used in a ritual context. As a result of developments in the fields of religious studies, anthropology and historical studies, amulets in collections are no longer studied exclusively as objects whose only purpose was to carry and convey the message of their inscriptions. The "mysterious" inscriptions seemed to have been one of the main attractive features —next to the precious stones— for collectors of Islamic amulets. The decipherment of the inscriptions, their meaning and symbolism was crucial in the study of these magical objects. However, the focus on amulets used in actual living settings has opened the possibility of comparing and reconstructing the live of amulets in different historical contexts.

1.5.1. Amulets in collections

The advantage of studying collections is that they act as repositories of material from different origins which allow comparative analysis. If well documented, objects in collections can offer insights into the role of material culture in certain practices. As mentioned before, collections were the first repositories where scholars could find specimens to study, and even after the development of the study of objects in live settings, collections are still waiting for new approaches. The kinds of objects that were included in collections sometimes fitted the guidelines of what collectors wanted to acquire and to the story they wanted to tell. Other collections were formed by very wealthy individuals who acquired objects en masse, in some of these cases collectors were not even aware of the kinds of objects they possessed, a fact that indicates that there was no intended story to tell.[81] In other cases, the collected amulets were the only ones accessible to collectors, meaning that the stories they developed had to be adapted to the availability of objects.[82]

Amulets and talismans in collections have been studied in relation to the status of the collections. On the one hand, there are collections in process of formation and are the result of

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[81] Example of this situation is the case J.P. Morgan's collection. Cfr. A. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, p.38-41

[82] About the absence of particular objects in collections Crf. S. Byrne, A. Clarke, R. Harrison and R. Torrence "Networks, Agents and Objects: Frameworks for Unpacking Museum Collections" in *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum* edited by S. Byrne, A. Clarke, R. Harrison and R. Torrence, p. 9

museographic arrangement, in other words, they comprise objects from different origins (even from diverse smaller collections) being put together by museum keepers. On the other hand, there are collections fully formed, many of them composed by one single collector such as the T.C.C.P.A. or Alexander Fodor's collection of Islamic amulets. Alexander Fodor was among the most prominent scholars who studied amulets from the Islamic world in the 20th century. His work mainly revolved around objects that he had collected for himself. *Amulets from the Islamic World* is the catalogue of the exhibition of his own collection of amulets, held in Budapest in 1988.[83] His collection included different kinds of objects gathered during his 20 years of research in the Middle East and North Africa. He described the amulets in the context of the "popular culture of Islam", which included not only amulets used by Muslims, but also those of Christian and Jews who lived in Muslim lands. As part of the machinery of magic, these amulets were considered to allow occasional contact with supernatural powers, they could bring good and bad luck, or offer protection and healing.

In the 1990's interest in Islamic amulets and talismans seems to have grown as evidenced in the numerous publications on the topic. In these publications we find a reformulation of magic. I mentioned before that magic was the immediate reference for the explanation of amulets, but it was an exclusive category that excluded other possible explanations. This time, however, magic was treated as a more inclusive category. In the introduction to *Magic and Divination,* E. Savage-Smith says that magic "seeks to alter the course of events, usually by calling upon a supernatural force (most often God or one of his intercessors, the prophets, saints, and angels). It can be viewed as a form of rationality with its own sets of assumptions, based upon a process of analogy rather than proven causes and effects"[84] In the Islamic world "one of the primary uses of magic is to ward off disease and to preserve well-being"[85]. In this sense, amulets become a potential source for the study not only of the magical, but also of the religious and medical practices.[86] Following this reformulation of magic, in 1992 Francis Maddison and Emilie Savage-Smith published *Science, Tools and Magic.* Based on the Nasser D. Khalili Collections of artefacts from the Islamic world, amulets and talismans are treated as the material expression of the science of astrology and also as

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[83] Fodor, Alexander. *Amulets from the Islamic World. Catalogue of the Exhibition held in Budapest in 1988*, Budapest : Eötvös Loránd University, Chair for Arabic Studies : Csoma de Kőrös Society, Section of Islamic Studies, 1990.

[84] E. Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination*, p. xiii

[85] E. Savage-Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p.xxii

[86] E. Savage-Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p. xv

tools used in medical practice. In line with this reformulation is Stefano Carboni's *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art.* It revolves around the role of astrologic imagery for imbuing objects with talismanic and apotropaic power. The items included in his study come mostly from the eastern Iranian peoples, these are mirrors and metal objects such as pen boxes, inkwells, bowls, mortars, ewers, and coins that alternate images and inscriptions.[87]

Even when the reformulation of magic put together the idea of fluidity between the medical, religious and magical aspects, the kinds of objects explored continued to come from the same repositories that contained amulets and talismans from the elite culture. Made with valuable materials and meant to be used by sultans and kings, these amulets were all inscribed and included pieces of jewellery such as rings and pendants; talismanic shirts, and other objects inscribed with magical and religious formulae or with zodiac signs. Despite the fact that these objects are quite diverse, their inscriptions were the main focus. Studies on these kinds of elite objects included the publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) in New York. Yasmine al-Saleh's *Amulets and Talismans of the Islamic World* is a short text that revolves around inscriptions as the main physical features of amulets and talismans in the world of Islam. Amulets and talismans (terms that she uses indistinctly), are objects imbued with powers through the inscriptions they bear. Inscriptions are of a different nature and come from different sources, so depending on them, objects function as part of occult practices, or as cures prescribed by a physician. In this sense, since the nature of the inscription determines the nature of the amulet/talismans, inscriptions are regarded the main object of analysis and it is the content of the inscription alone that provides the tools for interpretation.

Inscribed amulets seem to have been the most pursued objects to collect. Inscriptions provide an entry point to the study of objects and may very well disclose aspects of how they were manufactured and used. However in the study of amulets, inscriptions are only one aspect. The shift from the content/meaning of the inscription, to the text itself as part of the materiality of the object, and as result of a historical development of material culture occurred after the material turn. The material turn has impacted in the way disciplines approach their study objects. The focus on the materiality of objects, the way humans engage with them and the meanings that derive, from these relations, are the main features of more contemporary studies on amulets. Moreover, since objects

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[87] S. Carboni, *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997

are studied in their engagement with humans, the ethnographic approach has turned to be useful to explore particular cases.

Moving on to more contemporary studies that have contributed to our better understanding of amulets and talismans, I can mention the following. One of them is the project *Small Blessings: Amulets at the Pitt Rivers Museum.*[88] As part of the study of the Pitt Rivers' collections, this project sought to explore objects from different backgrounds collected by the French ethnologist Adrien de Mortillet in the early 20th century. The objects came from all continents and were used in different periods. Unconnected at first sight due to their different materials and shapes, and despite the fact that the amulets were made for various purposes such as to bring good luck, protect from evil, misfortune and disease, and heal ailments and disease, all these objects catalogued under the category of "amulet" bear a common feature. "…people created and used them, believed they had the power to alter or affect the world around them. In this sense amulets can help us understand the human need for well-being and universal concepts of hope and believe."[89] This being said, the above mentioned study of amulets focuses on the intention of their makes and users, a human intention that is shared by all regardless the cultural background. *Small blessings* offered a fresh perspective on amulets. It goes beyond old orientalist ideas of the "other" that have loaded amulets with ideas of backwardness and irrationality, and it links amulets to a shared human experience.

Although collections have been the main repositories of amulets, very few scholars have reflected on how collection formation implicates the construction of a particular narrative.[90] Reflections on narrating or telling a story through collecting are to be found after the formation of Collection Studies, a result from the material turn that occurred during the 1980's and 1990's within the field of archaeology and anthropology.[91] In the case of amulets from the Muslim world in general and amulets from Palestine in particular, these reflections came from scholars involved in museum studies.[92]

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[88] *Small Blessings. Amulets at the Pitt Rivers Museum.* http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/amulets/

[89] "Introduction" in *Small Blessings. Amulets at the Pitt Rivers Museum*. http://web.prm.ox.ac.uk/amulets/

[90] V. Porter. "The collection of Arabic and Persian seals and amulets in the British Museum: notes on a history" in *Amulets and Talismans in the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections,* Leiden: Brill (in process of publication.)

[91] D. Hicks, "The Material-Cultural Turn: Event and Effect" in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*. p. 26-98

[92] V. Tamari's study on the formation of the Canaan Collection; For more about collecting relics Cfr. A. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, p.9

An interesting approach to the study of amulets that has been useful for this thesis is Rose Muravchick's PhD dissertation *God is the Best Guardian: Islamic Talismanic Shirts from the Gunpowder Empires*.[93] It is a study of a selection of Ottoman, Mughal and Safavid talismanic shirts and the way they have been used to narrate different museum/exhibition stories. The shirts are an example of the varied material objects that have functioned as talismans in the Muslim world. As objects that entered collections, they have been studied within the discourses formulated in museums' exhibitions around Islamic art, Islamic talismans, Islamic magic, etc. In her thesis, Muravchick analyses how the meaning and function of the shirts have been constructed through time in exhibitions, and proposes an alternative way to analyse the talismanic shirts through their materiality.[94] Focusing on the shirt-ness of these talismans, her focus shifts from the magical to the material aspect of the talismans allowing them to be explored through the engagement that each user had with them.

1.5.2. The study of amulets in live settings

The second mode of studying amulets has been in situ. Ethnography has contributed to the study of objects in the environment where they are produced and used. In Palestine, ethnographic work started in the early 19th century by scholars who carried out long stays and were able to register the way people used certain objects in everyday life. In this sense, ethnographers were able to witness how the use of amulets took place in ritual settings and find the connexion that these amulets had with other objects, places and particular people. Through ethnographic work, it was also possible to explore the many uses of one amulet based on the user, the circumstances and the geographical location.

One of the ethnographers who explored amulets in live settings was precisely Taufiq Canaan. His writings have contributed enormously to the study of amulets in general because he informed us of a folk cosmology that articulated beliefs and practices in which material objects, that at first sight would have never been considered amulets, were actually used for their healing and protective power. As mentioned before, the amulets from the Muslim world were considered by scholars if they contained inscribed references to the Qur'an, but also if they had any kind of "mysterious" inscription to decipher. Canaan, however, based on his ethnographic research was able

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[93] R.E. Muravchick, "God is the Best Guardian: Islamic Talismanic Shirts from the Gunpowder Empires" (2014). *Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertations*. 1380. https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/1380

[94] R.E. Muravchick, *Ibidem.*

to collect not only inscribed amulets, but also objects that did not bear inscriptions and that were made of natural materials. These amulets allow us, for the first time, to delve into another aspect of the religiosity of Palestine's inhabitants, the practical solutions of Muslims, Christians and Jews to obtain or establish well-being in their everyday life.

In general terms, ethnography added a better understanding of amulets already comprised in collections by comparing the objects that merely functioned as museum pieces to objects that were still in use as medico/magical/religious devices. It also disclosed that the performative aspect behind the objects was crucial to reconstruct the way they had been used before being collected, not only as immobile objects in a glass case, but as dynamic objects that had been moving around. Moreover, ethnographers added objects that would never be included before, like objects used for their healing and protective powers that could only be discovered by looking at them within ritual contexts or everyday life religious practices. This is the case of objects without inscriptions, made of natural materials and with seemingly no human intervention at all such as stones and twigs of *al-*



Figure 5. Twigs from *al-mīs* tree (celtis australis). Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

mīs tree described in Chapter 2. (Fig. 5) The T.C.C.P.A. is one of the best examples of collections with such sort of amulets.

The study of amulets in situ has also benefited from the reflection on the agency of objects. The focus on materiality and agency involves the study of objects in the way humans engage with them, and the meanings that from these relations unfold. The study of amulets in this way adds to our knowledge a better understanding of how and why particular amulets are used in particular contexts and how, as they circulate in time and space, change meaning/ are used differently and acquire other functions.

In exploring the materiality in particular amulets, some studies have reflected on the importance of the materials employed. Certain materials are chosen to be in amulets because in common knowledge, they are useful means to convey a protective and healing power such as the black bituminous mineral of the Musa stones explored in Chapter 2. However, when the materials are not available, substitutes or representations of such materials are employed, which discloses that the perception of the materials employed is sometimes more important than the actual materials. By focusing on the agency of the amulet maker and the ritual that activates its powers, and the kind of power he/she imbues the amulet with, authenticity of materials turns less relevant. This is the case of the "industrialised" amulets analysed by Ventura, Popper-Giveon and Abu-Rabia,[95] and amulets that we find in the T.C.C.P.A. such as the blue beads in necklaces and bracelets.

Another interesting reflection on amulets in Palestine that has come from the study of live settings is their social function. Based on the Widad Kamel Kawar Collection of Palestinian dress and jewellery, it is possible to see amulets in a wider context, in this case, the context set by the attire. They were not isolated objects, they worked in articulation with other objects such as coins, garments, etc. From the Canaan amulets I can asses that most of the items were at some point attached to clothes. The rest were meant to be hung on the walls of the house or were part of remedies that the client had to ingest or burn.

Some amulets carried on clothes also had an aesthetic value due to their long lasting materials which would ensure a continuous protective power. The amuletic jewellery, meaning jewellery made of different metals and stones, was used also to adorn the person who carried amulets. These pieces of jewellery were meant to be seen and as such they were public statements functioning as social markers. They could either be used alone or in combination with other amulets

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[95] J. Ventura, A. Popper-Giveon and A. Abu-Rabia, "Materialised Beliefs: 'Industrialised' Islamic Amulets", *Visual Ethnography* 3.2 (2014): 30-47.



Figure 6. Headdress (*meklab*) from Hebron covered with coins from the dowry and amulets. Widad Kawar Collection
Photo credits: Widad Kawar

and objects. When used alone, the single object would acquire meaning as part of the dress; when used with other objects they formed part of a bigger and complex "text". As if each one of the objects was a word in a written text, they would tell a story and establish a sort of intertextuality between them. This intertextuality has been explored in the embroidery patterns on Palestinian attire.[96] In this way, I argue that amuletic jewellery and visible amulets, as part of the attire, were in

[96] M. Skinner, *Palestinian Embroidery Motifs: A Treasury of Stitches 1850-1950,* Melisende Publishing of London and Rimal Publications of Nicosia, 2007

a sort of interplay with the embroidery patterns and with the clothes, contributing to the story that the owner wanted to tell.

One example is the Hebronite *meklab* (bridal ornament) from the Widad Kamel Kawar Collection.[97] Made around the year 1900, it was worn on the back, on top of the bridal wear. It consisted of a piece of fabric covered with Ottoman, Egyptian and European coins; different kinds of pendants with inscriptions; amulets made of fangs and *dandūsha*[98]; silver amulets in the shape of animals; stones; and beads. Each object was acquired in a different moment of the life of the owner, and was attached with a specific purpose in mind. In some cases, coins and silver amulets could be detached to be sold or given away (to solve a financial problem). The coins were part of the dowry and were attached to the clothes to disclose publicly the social and economic status of the bride. This public display of one's possessions came with the disadvantage of potentially being subjected to the envy of others. The amulets were then attached to protect the bride and her dowry from any evil eye, but also amulets through their shapes and materials showed if the woman had made a vow to a saint, or had gone to a particular sheikh in order to cure an ailment, increase fertility, etc. The more amulets, the more protection the woman gets.

1.6. The study of amulets in modern Palestine

Mentions of amulets and talismans used by the inhabitants of Palestine appear for the first time in the 19th century in the work of European travellers and missionaries that visited the "Holy Land". Described as curious manifestations of the primitive folk magic practiced by illiterate peasants,[99] amulets were seen as a residual from Biblical times. The "other" was embodied in the figure of the *fellāḥ* (peasant)[100], who was seen as living in a state of backwardness. Peasants' beliefs and customs were set in a frame of superstition and magic.

Members of the Christian missions who carried out research on the local population considered the inhabitants heirs of the Biblical past, whose customs and manners could be

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97 Figure 6. A pictures of this *meklab* shows in detail the different components. Cfr. Kawar W.K. Threads of Identity, p. 111, 128

98 *dandūsha (pl.danādīsh)* refers to the ending part of some jewellery and amulets that commonly contains three parts that hang and produce a sound..

99 D. Skemer, *Binding Words: Textual Amulets in the Middle Ages*, p. 3

100 In MSA *fallāḥ pl. fallāḥūn*

interpreted in Biblical terms.[101] This idea of immobility and permanence that characterised the local population was very appealing[102]; the life depicted in the Bible could be seen in the life of actual Palestinians. However, to the missionaries' surprise, local inhabitants had some customs that did not completely correspond to the Biblical ones, which disclosed that after all there had been some changes. Even the practices of Palestinian Christians seemed to have gone through some sort of distortion and to have been influenced by the superstitious mind of other communities. Interestingly, these Biblical traces were mainly sought in the peasant population who happened to be in its majority Muslims. So paradoxically, the idealised Biblical culture that missionaries and travellers were looking for was actually deeply intertwined with the practices of Muslim peasantry.

Beliefs, practices and the material culture of the peasants were worthy of being recorded and collected despite the fact that they were seen with inferiority. They were all part of a culture that was threatened to disappear due to the urbanisation process that had boomed after the Tanzimat Reforms. The concern that the Biblical remains were once and for all going to disappear was the main drive for the first ethnographers to record expressions of Palestinian folklore. Among them were European scholars such as Philip Baldenspergen, Gustaf Dalman, Elizabeth Finn, Hilda Granqvist, J.E. Hanauer, Lees Robinson, born-in-Palestine scholars such as Lidia Einsler, and Palestinian scholars such as Stephan H. Stephan, Elias Haddad and Taufiq Canaan.

Palestinian folklore was deposited mainly in the customs of peasants and bedouins who had been through a sedentarisation process.[103] Amulets were part of these customs and superstitious beliefs. Predominantly Muslim, or Mohammedan —as it was the common way to call a Muslim, the peasantry was referred to as the ethnographic "other." Even for Palestinian ethnographers, mainly urbanites and educated in missionary schools, life in the countryside was the source of folklore; a life that they recognised as part of their own culture and past, but simultaneously one that they distanced themselves from. Taufiq Canaan is an example of a locally born, Protestant raised

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[101]Among these we find the work published in 1907 by J.E. Hanauer, *Folk-lore of the Holy Land: Moslem, Christian and Jewish*, edited by Marmaduke Pickthall; P.J. Baldenspergen, *The Immovable East: Studies of the People and Customs of Palestine*, ed. Frederic Less, Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913; the publications of the Palestine Exploration Fund; among others. Then it comes the work done by the Palestinian ethnographers and Western anthropologist such as Gustav Dalman and Hilma Granqvist.

[102] The idea of a Biblical past that had been preserved was very present in scholars who wrote about Palestine. Cfr. P. J. Baldenspergen, *The Immovable East: Studies of the People and Customs of Palestine*, ed. Frederic Less, Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913

[103] Tawfiq Canaan's *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries* is one of interesting because it shows how Palestinian folklore was deposited mainly in peasant life.

Palestinian researcher, who nonetheless, had an ambivalent engagement with the folklore of his country, as explored in the next chapters.

1.7. Amulet and talisman in the writings of Taufiq Canaan

Taufiq Canaan is one of the most important references for the study of amulets and talismans in the modern Palestinian context. It is through his writings and collection, the largest one of amulets from the Levant, that we know about the diversity of objects used in healing practices, the terms employed to refer to them, their form of use and application, and different and simultaneous social, religious, magical, medical functions. This subchapter, therefore, revolves around Taufiq Canaan's works and the way he referred to the amulets and talismans. Based on his ethnographic findings and on the usage of the terms that circulated among other scholars researching the same kinds of objects, I aim to show the development of the terminology used by Canaan. This thesis follows the way Canaan referred to particular objects in his collection, either as amulets, talismans, or by using *emic* terms.

Taufiq Canaan's works are available in English, German and Arabic. Most of his academic work in English corresponds to his academic production under the British Mandate. Canaan also wrote in German, mainly at the beginning of his career and at the end, and published a few works in Arabic. His English and German publications targeted an audience that included Western scholars residing in Palestine and abroad, as well as Palestinian scholars most of whom had studied in missionary schools and were part of his own urban milieu. The way he addressed his audience took shape throughout the years; it was influenced by his education in missionary schools, his work in missionary institutes, and by his political involvement in different kinds of associations.

Taufiq Canaan was very active in the medical and the anthropological field but also in the political life of Palestine. From his childhood, he was exposed to different social circles through the labour of his father as a Lutheran pastor and through his attendance of missionary schools. After his studies at the Syrian Protestant College, he worked in German institutions that gave him access to circles of German scholars. His research on medicine was published in local journals such as *al-Kulliya*, the Bulletin of his alma mater. He was very active as a member in different associations, such as the Alumni Association of the Syrian Protestant College, the YMCA, and the Jerusalem Arab Medical Association. He was co-founder of The Palestine Arab Medical Association, in 1944, and president of the Jerusalem branch until 1954 and of the Palestine Association until 1948. As for his involvement in anthropological research, Canaan joined the American School of Oriental

Research, and got easy access to the latest research on Folklore in Palestine that was already circulating among foreign scholars. He became acquainted with the history of customs and folk beliefs of Palestinian peasants, as well as with the Biblical approach that was used to explain much of the life of the peasants.

After the First World War, Canaan gave yearly lectures on Palestinian Folk Medicine to the students of the German Archaeological School and sometimes to the members of the American School for Oriental Research. Through these lectures he got a good name among scholars affiliated to different institutions. He followed closely the investigations of researchers at The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology; Research Unit of the German Archaeological Institute (*Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes)*[104] such as Gustaf Dalman (1855-1941), Albrecht Alt (1883-1956) and Martin Noth (1902-1968) who influenced his approach to the study Palestine's folklore.[105] His knowledge on the subject was so highly respected that he was eventually invited by Prof. Herzberg to collaborate in the posthumous publication of the last volume of Dalman's *Arbeit und Sitte*.[106]

Taufiq Canaan's most important involvement was in the POS where he occupied various posts and was able to publish most of his work. As soon as the POS was founded, he became a member and started publishing regularly in its journal. He was appointed its secretary, and editor of the journal between 1920 and 1939. In this period, Canaan was able to enlarge the Society's membership list, leading to the improvement of the Journal, which eventually had to be extended in length in order to include the works of more scholars.[107] For Canaan's own research this period is also the most prolific. The Journal of the POS was the main outlet of his research. He was able to publish around 30 articles and 5 books through it.

The contents of his publications are full of *emic* forms of designation for the different elements of Palestinian folklore, which shows an early attempt to translate the culture he studied into his own. Cultural translation has been at the core of much anthropological research and postcolonial studies. Although it became a topic in the 1950's among British anthropologists, the

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[104] K. Nashef, "Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works." Translated by Khalil Sleibi. *Majallat ad-Dirasat al-Filastiniya* 50 (2002): 69-91.

[105] K. Nashef, "Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works", p.16

[106] T. Canaan, *The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs, Part 2*, p.135

[107] T. Canaan, *Dr. Taufik Canaan, Family Story: His Memoirs.* Unpublished manuscript typed out by Fauzi Mantoura in 2016, p.39; T. Canaan, *Dr. Taufik Canaan, Family Story: His Memoirs.* (with Intro by Mitri Raheb) Dar al-Kalima: Bethlehem, 2021; JPOS, Vol XV, 1935, p.194

approach of some earlier ethnographers, such as Canaan, to the study of "the other" was loaded with carefulness in the use of concepts, and an awareness in differentiating themselves from their study object. Implicit in this distinction, was not only a critical approach and acknowledgement of the historicity of their own ways of thinking, but a colonial attitude of distinction based on their superiority. From this perspective, Canaan's works show how he "translated" cultural features of his study object "the folklore of the *fallāḥīn*" into his own cultural framework by including *emic* concepts. His vocabulary and style is very much in tune with the cultural translation of his time, but it is unique in the way he includes concepts to accurately describe his study "object". The role that Canaan played in translating one culture into another has another aspect as we see him oscillating between his familiarity and closeness to his study object, and his distance and differentiation from it. The way he categorised the "other" shows his acknowledgement of himself as coming from a shared Palestinian culture where key concepts have to be left in the original language.

Taufiq Canaan's forms of identification with Palestinian folklore is key to understand the usage of the concept of amulet and talisman in his work. He used the English terms amulet and talisman extensively, which in Arabic were named in various ways according to the material composition, shape, and how they were used; aspects that were very fluid as the *emic* forms of reference show.[108] A good example of this is the term *shabbeh,*[109] it is used to refer to the alum as material, but it also designates an alum bead which is meant to be hung either alone or in combination with other materials. Another example is *keff sadabie* (spray of rue)[110]. The name comes from the fact that it resembles the palm of a hand (*keff*), and due to the shape it is used as a *khamsa* to protect from the evil eye.[111] *Khamsa* might be one of the best examples, because although it refers first of all to the number five, it has been associated with the open hand with five fingers. When uttering the word *khamsa*, the form is intended, but also the function of the *khamsa* as protection against the evil eye.

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[108] For a complete list of epic terms used for the Canaan amulets, see Table 1 in the Appendixes.

[109] In MSA *shabba*

[110] In MSA *kaff sadhabiya*

[111] Garcia Probert, M.A. "Twigs in the Tawfiq Canaan Collection" in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections*. Leiden: Brill (In process of publication)

1.7.1 Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel

Taufiq Canaan's first written work that addresses the phenomenon of amulets within a wider study of Palestinian folklore is *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel,* published in 1914. In this work, he analyses beliefs and popular medicine by using medical terminology: aetiology; diagnosis; prognosis; prophylaxis; vows; and treatment. Amulets are discussed in two parts of the book. First, under the chapter on aetiology or the cause of diseases, where they are considered protective measures against the effects of the evil eye, which according to Palestinian belief is the main cause of illness.[112] Second, amulets and talismans are analysed under treatment procedures where he distinguishes between amulets and talismans, talks about the origin of their use, the kinds, and functions.

Amulette is the German term that Canaan uses to refer in general to amulets. He points out that this is the translation he uses for many Arabic terms, among which are the three most commonly used terms: *ḥirz* (Schutz), *ḥijāb* (Decke/was deckt), and *ṭalsam* (Talisman/ Zauberschutzmittel).[113] According to Canaan amulets are the result of the need to seek protection against evil, supernatural forces. An amulet then, can refer to almost anything that is used for protection. The way they work is by attracting the gaze of whoever gives the evil eye. Amulets are small objects that can easily be overlooked, so Palestinians recur to all sorts of beautiful and strange objects with striking shapes and colours such as attractive pieces of jewellery or uncommon objects such as twigs, fangs, gilded plants, to deviate the attention. In this way the evil eye that comes from the gaze of a person cannot take effect.[114] As mentioned, the other function of amulets is to alleviate sickness, pain or discomfort. So their form of application may be determined by the fact that they should come in contact with the sick part of the body.[115] Amulets for general protection, or all-embracing amulets as Canaan calls them “allgemeinschützendes Amulett”, are usually worn underneath or between the clothes.

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[112] T. Canaan, *Auberglaube*, p.56

[113] Canaan mentions that *ḥaraza* is said to have derived from *ḥarasa*, which means to guard, watch and control. Cfr. T. Canaan, *Auberglaube*, p.77

[114] T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.78

[115] T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.79

On the other hand, according to Canaan talismans refer to inscribed objects that in Arabic are called *ḥijābāt*.[116] Talismans always contain sacred text and should not be desecrated when worn. This is why users are careful wearing them underneath clothes, or folded, wrapped and put into containers. There are different types of containers such as the well known *khiyār,* a cucumber-shaped silver case, there are also fabric and leather pouches. The inscriptions in a talisman come in many forms, they range from Qur'anic inscriptions, specific names of God (*al-'asmā' al-ḥusnā*), the story of a particular talisman,[117] references to particular evil spirits, magic squares, symbols, and what could seem to be "meaningless" scratches."[118] As there is no standard form, talismans can also contain extracts from the New and Old Testament; mainly but not exclusively for Christian amulets. From these texts, particular verses, and words are extracted and arranged in different ways such as in squares where the complete word is written or where the word is broken up into its many letters.

The power of these *ḥijābāt* is transmitted in different ways. The most common material used in talismans is paper, on which the inscription is either written or printed. Most of the times they are carried on the body or hung on the bed of a patient, from where the power is transmitted by direct physical contact. There are cases where the *ḥijāb* is burnt and the patient is cleansed by his/her exposure to the smoke of the inscribed leaves. The talisman can also be dissolved in ritually pure water and drunk. Another way to transfer the power of the inscription is described by Canaan: "The *ḥijāb* is placed directly on the skin where the spleen is, over the writing one holds a metal spoon where burning coals are placed. The fire drives the power of the inscriptions into the spleen, which shrinks immediately." [119]

1.7.2 The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans

The second text by Canaan is *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans.* It was written in English and published in the journal *Berytus: Archaological Studies* in 1937.[120] It was re-published in a

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[116] T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p. 99

[117] See *ḥirz al-ghāsila* about the washerwoman *Murjāne*. Amulet catalogued no. 960 and 1076.

[118] Dr. Canaan uses "meaningless" not as a pejorative adjective, but as the quality of those inscriptions that he was not able to understand. Canaan was aware of the use of separate letters, made-up words with "no meaning", and scratches, in amulets.

[119] T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.115

[120] T. Canaan, "Decipherment of Arabic Talismans," *Berytus: Archaeological Studies*, v. 4 & 5 (1937).

monograph on magic and divination in 2004.[121] In this work, Canaan analyses in detail the features of talismanic inscriptions and highlights the power of the written word in the efficacy of the object. He develops with further detail the topic of talismans that he had been working on in *Aberglaube*. Canaan mentions that amulets and talismans are those objects that in the Levant are called: *ḥijāb*[122], *wifq*[123], *ḥamīla, ta'wīdha*[124] *and ḥirz*[125]. Although these terms are used indistinctly to refer to inscribed amulets and talismans, *ḥijāb* and *ḥirz* may also refer to uninscribed ones.[126] *Ḥijāb* and *ḥirz* are more generic, and Canaan employs them for any object with or without inscriptions that possesses and conveys protection or healing. Due to the inherent qualities, the object is used as part of ritual practices to achieve love, good health, well-being, to help in finding a lost object, or establish favour from others.

Although I explained that in theory a difference between amulet and talisman can be established, in practice it is difficult to apply this distinction rigorously. The use of the terms seems to correspond to different categories based on different functions. Moreover, another problem comes when amulets are added to talismans,[127] or when different amulets/talismans become part of a more complex/bigger amulet that combines materials and contains little pieces that when used alone could work as amulets as well. Although this is a feature of many amulets in Canaan's collection, he did not explore this issue in depth.

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[121] T. Canaan, "The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans." In *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, edited by Emilie Savage-Smith, 125–77. Aldershot: Ashgate/Varorium, 2004.

[122] From the root *ḥajaba*, to cover, to hide from sight, to conceal, a *ḥijāb* covers and protects the one who bear it. Cfr. H. Wehr, Dictionary, p.184; An amulet which renders its wearer invulnerable and ensures success for his enterprises. Cfr. "ḥidjāb", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition, Glossary and Index of Terms*, Edited by: P.J. Bearman, Th. Banquis, C.E. Bowworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs Bowworth. Consulted online on 20 June 2016 <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/10.1163/1573-3912_ei2glos_SIM_gi_01579>

[123] From the passive form *wuffiqa*, to have success, have good fortune. Cfr. H. Wehr, Dictionary, p.1270

[124] First used in preislamic poetry, *taʿwīdh* pl. *taʿāwīdh* which according to H. Wehr means amulet, talisman, but also refer to a charm, spell or incantation. Interesting is to note that the root of this term in its form II *ʿawadha* means to pronounce a charm or incantation, to fortify someone with a charm, but also to place someone under God´s protection by praying.

[125] Another term which, according to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, is to be found in the writings of the 10th century author Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī is *ḥirz* pl. *aḥrāz, ḥarraza*, which means amulet, but also has been used to refer to a fortified place, refuge, sanctuary. The root of this term is *ḥaraza* that means to keep, guard, protect, to take care of.

[126] T. Canaan, "The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans" p.69

[127] T. Canaan, *The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans*, p.70

1.7.3 The cardboards and the catalogue

Another two important sources to know how Taufiq Canaan conceptualised amulets are the cardboards where he attached the objects he gathered over almost 50 years. Next to each object, he jotted down in Arabic, English and German, information about their provenance, material, former owners, and sometimes the way they had been used. These notes are highly valuable because they document the ethnographic material he collected, but also because they contain terminology in three languages, which discloses Canaan's effort to translate as accurately as possible. The date of these cardboards is rather uncertain; they might have been made by Canaan throughout the years that he collected the objects, or prepared once he had acquired most of the items, which seems more plausible since the amulets are arranged per kind and this could have been done only when the collection was almost complete. So for instance, animal amulets are all on one cardboard, glass beads from Hebron on another cardboard, *mawāsik* (pendants) on a separate one, and so on.



Figure 7. Amulets attached to cardboards with notes in various languages. Tawfik Canaan Collection Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

According to the cardboards, the material that Canaan collected includes both amulets and talismans. Items explicitly described as talismans[128] are those made of paper, folded or rolled and kept in a cylindrical case, a cloth, leather or metal pouch intended to be used with a particular goal in mind and its power is more of reestablishing well-being than protection. These talismans are described in Arabic as *ḥijāb.* Few *ḥijābāt* in the Collection are similar in shape, they have triangular shape, but the pouch contains other materials such as *habb barakeh,* a kind of seed, (see amulet 290, Fig. 3), which points to the fact that the term may also refer more to the triangular shape of the pouch than the actual written talisman inside it. In the case of amulet 290, the *habb barakeh* replaced the writing, and worked as the message of the talisman. This would explain why the term *ḥijāb* is also used as a general term not only to refer to paper amulets but to a wide range of objects meant to protect the user, such as the the embroidery patterns described in previous pages.

Because the cardboards do not always offer full documentation, there are items that are not so easy to define as amulet or talismans, and might have been used in one way or another. It is only in comparing them with similar objects in the collection, or objects currently used, or mentioned by Canaan, that we can know about them.

The last source that we have from Canaan, is the catalogue of the whole collection. Handwritten in German in five notebooks, the catalogue, unpublished until now, contains the information of the cardboards in a systematic way. What is interesting to note here is his choice for the German language, and the way that even in the German description he retained the *emic* terms from which we know the many different names of the amulets. The complete catalogue is a complementary source to the cardboards since many of the objects that were originally attached to them had been detached throughout the years. Moreover, there are some items from the collection whose format does not allow them to be attached to the cardboards, so they are kept in separate cardboard boxes, the original containers where Canaan kept them.

The ways the objects are described relate to their shape and function. So besides the general terms such as *ḥijāb*, *ḥirz*, we have designations based on the actual name of stones such as *ḥajar damm*[129] and *ḥajar mūsā*[130]; based on the beads size and shape such as *'ayn al-jamal;* and for

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[128] See image with talismans catalogued with numbers: 289 to 297

[129] It is a dark red stone; a variety of jasper known as heliotrope that may have red inclusions that resemble spots of blood. The name of the stone comes from its red colour, but also from the way it has been used to prevent bleeding or to cure haemorrhage. *ḥajr damm* or blood stone appears in Canaan notes in the description of objects no. 196, 581, 608, 585, 920 and 1291.

[130] This kind of stone is described in detail in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4.

inscribed amulets based on the contents such as *ḥirz al-andrūn*, *ḥirz al-jawshān*, *ḥirz du'ā' 'ukāsha*; *ḥirz al-ghāsila*[131].

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter reflects on the historicity of the terms amulet and talisman, as well as the many other terms. It takes into account the local references that in Palestine exist to designate different kinds of objects used to restore well-being (to get protection, to achieve healing and to attract good luck). The English terminology to refer to these objects is not enough to analyse the amulets that are used in the Muslim world in general and in Palestine in particular, because it opaques the local forms of categorisation. Studying a particular case, such as the amulets collected by Taufiq Canaan, discloses that the *emic* terms offer a better understanding on how particular amulets were used. Paying attention to the way people name and refer to the material world, provides a better understanding of their own ways of seeing the world. For amulets used in Palestine, the *emic* terms registered by Taufiq Canaan show that their designation was based on different aspects: on the materials employed (like *ḥajar mūsā*), the shape they resembled or the abstraction of it (*khamsa* or '*ayn al -jamal*), some other amulets were called after their combination of materials (*'aqd al-badawīyya*), and some others after their use (*ḥajar ḥalīb, ḥajar damm*). All these designations, however, can be subsumed under the category of *ḥijāb.* This category is on the one hand, a generic term for all kinds of amulets, and on the other hand, a term that refers to triangular shaped talismans, most of the times made of paper with inscriptions. I employ the term *ḥijāb* in this thesis to refer to amulets and talismans indistinctively.

The inclusion of *emic* terms in the study of amulets and talismans of the Muslim world has gone through a long development. In colonial settings amulets were seen as part of the superstitious practices of the local population and therefore explained through the framework of magic. It was later on with the development of ethnography that attention was given to the ethnographic subjects and their active role in meaning making processes. *Emic* terms used by them were recorded and interpreted. Taufiq Canaan, representative of scholars who carried out studies on folklore, used his ethnographic data to document amulets. The way he wrote about the amulets provided an example of approaching amulets in living settings. Even though his research was embedded in a sort of Palestinian orientalism, his detailed descriptions of amulets based on ethnographic research and their contextualisation within a wider peasant culture has been useful.

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131 For the translation of all amulets and materials in the T.C.C.P.A., see Table 1

Through time, approaches to amulets and talismans developed in relation to the available sources. First, collections were considered the main source where amulets could be found. Later, the study of amulets included ethnographic studies that sent scholars to study the objects in actual living contexts. More and more attention was paid to how amulets not only carried meaning through an inscription, but also in relation to the ritual practices where the materials' inner power was activated in forms other than through the written word. Within the ritual context, amulets are seen not only as means but as active in effecting people's practices. Within these new approaches to amulets and talismans, we proceed to the next chapter in which we explore how amulets were used as part of the healing practices of Palestinians.

Chapter 2. Amulets as healing and protective remedies

2.1 Outline

When Taufiq Canaan collected his amulets, these were functioning within a particular medico-religious culture. With its traditional methods of protection and healing this culture of the peasants and bedouins of Palestine was very rich. It had accumulated elements from diverse religious traditions that had made their way into the Levant throughout the centuries. Everyday engagements of inhabitants with nature, and their beliefs concerning the supernatural and the divine shaped practices that were in a sense very pragmatic.

Material expressions of this culture included amulets. Users considered amulets meaningful and useful. Made to be hung, smelled, ingested or touched, amulets were of diverse kinds. Many amulets were for general use, others were designed for particular needs. Subjected to trial and error, all amulets underwent adjustments in order to improve their efficacy; those that could not be improved were disposed or relegated.

This chapter revolves around the use of amulets amongst Palestine's rural population within the everyday religious culture in the early 20th century. The chapter focuses on the rural culture because it was the predominant culture in Palestine since the larger part of the population lived in the countryside, and because it is where Canaan collected most of his amulets. However, the use of amulets in these areas can be largely extended to include urban areas, where part of the rural population had settled to make a living. In order to understand how these amulets were used, I analyse the cosmology and religious practice that framed the manufacture, use and circulation of the amulets that are nowadays in the T.C.C.P.A. Through particular amulets, the chapter shows their diversity and the multiple ways people engaged with them. By reflecting on how amulets operate in an everyday practice, the chapter discloses how they were adapted and adjusted to new social conditions and changes over time. Finally, I explore the function of amulets as a means of protection and healing, which was sometimes superseded or replaced by other functions as amulets entered other phases in their life and circulated in different networks.

2.2 Material religion and everyday religion

This chapter analyses a particular phase in the life of the amulets, i.e. when people used them to attain well-being through their protective and healing qualities, or through their capacity of

providing good luck. The religious culture that framed the use of these interesting objects is explored in its everyday context and the mechanisms for this are analysed from the methodological approach of "material religion."

The Canaan amulets can be explained within the framework of everyday religion. Located at the core of any religious tradition, everyday religion is the byproduct of the engagement with the sacred that responds to individual practical needs, and it is subjected to continuous adaptation, accumulation and transformation. In fact, everyday religious practice can take place within institutionalised religion, sometimes taking aspects from it and merging them with other meaningful elements: objects, symbols, images, etc. that pertain to individual, familial, or communal symbolic systems. In other words, even when religious practice undergoes strict regulation, there is always space left for the individual interpretation and engagement.[132]

The study of religion in its everyday form challenges the traditional notion of "religion", which has been considered a complete/closed system, whose relation with other "religions" takes place solely via assimilation or influence. Religion in its everyday context shows the fluidity and continuity from one religion to another. It also proposes a bottom-up approach. It shifts the attention from the institutionalised and official forms to how individuals shape their religious practices, experiences and expressions of piety. This shift shows how religiosity is constantly changing and adjusting to practical needs taking elements from wherever is necessary and suitable. This focus on the individual must include religious expressions in relation with any kind of authority, and the possible effects of tradition, as well as family and communal/social regulations.[133]

Within this everyday religion, material objects play an important role. After all people engage with the material world, get meaning from it and give meaning to it. In an everyday practice particular objects are more recurrent than others. This material aspect of religion is the focus of "material religion," an approach to the religious phenomena through the material world and its materiality (the way the material world has been ideologically constructed). It helps to understand the material objects, the role they play within the internal logic of the meaning systems and the meaning making processes of humans in their engagement with the world. Following the definition of Brend Plate:

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[132] M. McGuire, *Lived religion*, p.46

[133] M. McGuire, *Op. Cit.*, p.5

> "material religion is an investigation of the interactions between human bodies and physical objects, both natural and human-made; with much of the interaction taking place through sense perception; in special and identified spaces and times; in order to orient, and disorient, communities and individuals; toward the formal strictures and structures of religious traditions." [134]

In the inaugural issue of the Journal Material Religion, the editors have highlighted the importance of this approach, which adds to the study of religious textual traditions, authorities, and transmission of knowledge a fundamental aspect, that of the everyday engagement with the material objects. "Religion is what people do with material things, places, and how these structure and colour experience and one's sense of oneself and others."135 Focusing on the engagement with spaces, images, objects, etc., this approach aims to "arrive at a more robust account of how religion works in the lives of its adherents and in the societies that shape and are shaped by religion."136

According to this approach, things matter, regardless of their aesthetic evaluation because they are tangled with human relations. Such entanglement considers the haptic interaction; a significant element in the human engagement to material goods in general, and to material culture of religion in particular.[137] It is through the senses that people engage with objects. In the case of amulets, particular sensorial engagements are established from the way they are made and used. Simultaneously, these forms of engaging with them shape and re-shape their physical qualities.

In other phases such as when amulets circulate as commodities, or are collected and exhibited, the main engagement with amulets is through the faculty of touch and sight. However, when they function as a means to re-establish well-being, the engagement includes all the senses. They are not only meant to be seen or touched, but also hung in contact with the body, smelled, heard, seen and ingested. And even when the sense of touch comes to play, touching acquires a different form that involves a purpose of acquiring or transmitting a particular power.

2.3 The world of peasants and bedouins

The amulets that Canaan collected came mainly from rural Palestine. Palestine's countryside has been studied primarily through agricultural villages focusing on the culture of the peasantry, mostly

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[134] S. Brend Plate, *Key Terms in Material Religion*, p.4

[135] S. Brend Plate, B. Meyer, D. Morgan & C. Paine, "Editorial Statement," *Material Religion,* p.5

[136] S. Brend Plate, B. Meyer, D. Morgan & C. Paine, "Editorial Statement," *Material Religion*, p. 6

[137] E.F. King, *Material Religion and Popular Culture*, p.xiv

ignoring the culture of the bedouins, most of whom have a semi-sedentary life but have retained a distinct social structure. Peasant life has attracted a lot of attention because it was widespread, but also because the peasantry became a key symbol in the national imagery of Palestinians.[138] As I will discuss later in Chapter 5, the peasants have become the proof of the preexistence of a Palestinian people in the region and a very powerful symbol due to their connexion with the land. Bedouins, on the other hand, seem to have been excluded from the image of the autochthonous inhabitants due to their nomadic origin. Although most bedouins have become agriculturalists or engage in animal herding, their culture based on a tribal composition has rarely been addressed as an autochthonous feature of Palestine's rural world. However, in exploring the conditions that framed the manufacture, use and circulation of amulets, it is clear that peasants and bedouins interacted, they sometimes used same amulets, but that differences in their manufacture and usage existed as well.

By the the beginning of the 20th century, when Canaan acquired his amulets, the rural world had started to change and become more fragmented. Due to the changing conditions that modernisation brought, most inhabitants were forced to adopt new forms of living. The bedouins were forced to settle and enter agricultural work, changing much of their customs. The peasants and (settled) bedouins became tenants of private land, which turned them into labour workers. The peasants from villages near the towns, due to their location, became dependent on the urban economy. Some remained living in their villages, but continuously travelled back and forth to towns to sell their products. Other villagers migrated to the towns for work and settled there permanently. Although they were now inhabitants of towns, villagers kept many of their rural customs, among them their preference for particular forms of healing in which amulets were central. As a result, amulets kept being manufacured and circulating in the market. In sum, all these changes were fuelled by some events that need further discussion.

2.3.1. Reforms, modernisation

Palestine experienced many transformations since the introduction of the Tanzimat Reforms in 1830, a set of reforms that traversed half a century of regulations, and affected the years that followed. The changes that these reforms brought came after a series of infrastructural developments that further stimulated foreign investments. Roads and railways expanded, facilitating the mobility of products and people throughout the Levant, particularly between the coastal cities and the inland. In Palestine, these reforms were part of a process of economic opening which in

[138] S. Tamari, "Soul of the Nation", p.77

Pappe's words, "redefined the country as a geo-political unit, and changed its modes of means of production."[139] Such an economic change had important and sometimes contrasting effects in the urban and rural world. It affected the everyday life of the inhabitants and therefore the way they engaged with material objects (shrines, landscapes, amulets) related to their religious practice.

The economic changes benefited Jerusalem's urban milieu, to which Taufiq Canaan belonged. The new Europe-inclined economy facilitated the urban bourgeoisie access to social mobility and Westernised modes of culture. Other events in the first half of the 20th century also affected the population's life. The following extract from Canaan's diaries (written originally in English) exemplifies this:

> "We made many excursions with the children, who spoke all week of the coming Sunday and the picnic we will make. Such excursions were made especially after the First World War, as I had a carriage, which was the best one in Jerusalem. A few years later, I got a car. It is interesting to note the change I had during the years: I began my practice walking, and when the work increased I bought a donkey, later I had one then two horses, and after First World War I had a carriage and then a car. In 1948, when the Arab-Jewish war had broken out, I lost my car with my house, and the whole furniture and I again began to do my visits on my feet."[140]

The impact of these events in the countryside, was different. The peasantry, which was the vast majority of the population, experienced the Tanzimat Reforms as "a shadow over the clear skies of rural Palestine."[141] The agricultural land, that had for centuries been the centre of economic, social and religious life was now subjected to new rules that began to be enacted after the Land Code of 1858 (part of the Tanzimat). Having subsisted under a controlled form of cultivation, the land was after this code undergoing a series of transformations: its exploitation for monoculture, its division in plots and registration, opening the possibility for foreigners and wealthy Palestinian families to buy land and property. Plots had to be registered under one single owner abolishing the *musha'* system: the peasants' practice of collectively possessing, inhabiting, and cultivating the land. Since most peasants were not willing to put their name down on a deed, to avoid being controlled and taxed, they became part of the first generation of hired labourers on private lands that once had been leased by themselves from the Ottoman state. In this scheme, peasants became tenants of unknown

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[139] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.22

[140] T. Canaan, *The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs, Part I*, p.26

[141] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p. 21

or absentee landlords. They were no longer free to grow seasonal vegetables and fruits, but had to produce according to the demands of the market as set by the land-owners. They were obliged to pay a fixed percentage of their income to the owner of the plot. The result was considerably lower wages barely enough to live.

Bedouins also suffered from these changes. Nomadic in origin, bedouins were forced to turn their sphere of habitation into registered land consequently reducing the boundaries of what they were used to roam in. Even more invasive was the sedentarisation effort that was introduced and that obliged them to settle and to change their way of life.[142] Since the 19th century, bedouins had begun a semi-sedentary life becoming part of the hired farm labour that developed after the Land Code of 1858 and the abolishment of the *musha'* system. Although bedouin tribes kept distinctive features of their culture such as their clothes, their traditional medicine, and their social hierarchies, most of them assimilated to village life. Widad Kawar, a collector of Palestinian attire who carried out ethnographic research, provides an interesting passage that illustrates this process. It is about Aysheh a villager from Abu al-Fadl located on a hill north of al-Ramlah:

> "She was from the Sutaria Bedouin tribe that originated in the Khan Younis area of Gaza. A century earlier, for some reason, the whole tribe had moved from there to the Hebron area where they worked as hired farm labour. There, women were influenced by the local embroidery patterns and copied some of them… Aysheh said that her tribe found the land around Hebron too mountainous, so they moved to Abu al-Fadl, which was surrounded by agricultural land and connected to the railway…"[143]

These semi-sedentary bedouins kept strong bonds with the bedouins who did not settle before 1948, and functioned as a sort of bridge between the bedouins and the peasants. Trade among them prevailed, and as we can see from the Canaan amulets is the fact that some materials originally used among bedouins were sold to peasants. Materials such as red coral and cowry shells were bedouin in origin, the same applies for the technique of weaving threads of tiny blue beads creating a sort of net that was used to make amulet covers/pouches.[144] Amulets made of such materials were available in the markets of Jerusalem and Nabi Musa, which as explained in Chapter 4 had close ties due to the pilgrimage. In the case of the amulets documented by Canaan, it seems that there was a general

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[142] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.49

[143] W.K. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.260

[144] See amulet no. 490, 491

interest in acquiring bedouin amulets. What kind of reputation did bedouin amulets/ healing remedies have among Palestine's peasants? How were they integrated in amulet use in agricultural areas of Palestine? This aspect needs further investigation.

Several historical events and natural disasters at the beginning of the 20th century added to the pressure on the economy. First, the Ottoman government's involvement in the Great War, hindered the economy when a large number of peasants were sent to fight in support of the Germans. During this time, most of the population that remained in Palestine was transformed into unskilled labour force, and pushed to settle on the periphery of Palestine's urban centres.[145] Regarding the situation of the bedouins, after the first World War the British Mandate set political boundaries dividing the Negev Desert, which in actuality stretches between Beersheba, the Sinai Peninsula and Aqaba. Bedouins, in this sense, were restricted to move within specific areas.

Second, some natural disasters hit the country such as the locust plagues and droughts resulting in famines in the 1930's. This led to the pauperisation of the rural areas and their increased dependence on the urban centres. The peasantry left behind their old forms of living to become a rural proletariat that worked in the fields or as hired labour in other professions, eventually moving to the cities. This state of extreme poverty came hand in hand with malnutrition and illnesses related to the poor housing conditions and general living circumstances. The rural proletariat were called *harath* and according to Pappe, their number grew steadily around 1936.[146]

Finally, the Jewish immigration was "intensified during the agricultural depression of the early 30's adding pressure for the development of resources available to the Arab population."[147] These lands once owned by Palestinian absentee landowners, were now Zionist property and subjected to new rules of employment.

The boundaries between town and country started to become blurred as infrastructure gave access to easier and further travels eventually leading to the migration of many peasants to towns. Notwithstanding that these sort of town-country engagements had existed for centuries on a much smaller scale through trade, this new situation led to new settlements of peasants in towns. Despite the accelerated pace in which towns and villages were now interconnected, the urban and rural culture did not fuse in an even way. Peasants who had migrated to Jerusalem and other towns kept much of their rural culture and it was difficult for them to enter the urban circles. To be urban in the

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[145] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p. 44

[146] I. Pappe, *Op.Cit.*, p. 102

[147] Y. Miller, "Administrative Policy in Rural Palestine", p.135

late 19th/early 20th-century was not only about living in a town, it was about assimilating to a culture that was incorporating European forms of thinking and codes of conduct.

The social and religious composition, and dynamics together with the geographical location defined the engagement of peasants and bedouins with the different aspects of the modernisation process. The efforts to privatise the land and centralise the administration during the last years of Ottoman and British rule, did not reach all villages in the same way. "The more remote a place was from the central government, the greater was the autonomy of traditional units and therefore the importance of social tradition and the influence of community leaders in choosing the administrative chief of the unit."[148]

The engagement of the population with the governmental policies was defined by the nature of the village itself. In some of them, one family divided into clans was the prevailing controlling force, with the elders of each clan dominating political, economic and religious life. These villages were homogeneous in terms of religious practice. Other villages included diverse religious groups where sectarian lines were followed. Few others had significant portions of land owned by absentee landlords, whose representatives held important positions in the distribution of power.[149] These conditions affected how a place was treated and reacted to the Ottoman administrative and political reforms.

2.3.2 Disengagement with the land

The religious culture of rural Palestinians has never been a uniform condition. These two forms of sedentary and semi-nomadic life had been mingling with each other shaping differences according to locality, economic activity, political status, gender, social status, all of which would define the religious practice. However, the privatisation of land, the creation of a rural proletariat, the natural disasters and the political situation certainly modified social relations and population patterns, and with it, a whole system of cultural practices including the knowledge and application of traditional medicine, and forms of religious veneration.

One of the changes was in terms of physical mobility. Privatisation of the land, forced settlement and migration to urban areas impacted the way peasants and bedouins engaged with the land and the landscape in their daily life. Peasants had lived an autonomous and pastoral life based

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[148] G. Baer, "The Office and Functions of the Village Mukhtar", p.109

[149] Y. Miller, "Administrative Policy in Rural Palestine", p.128

on agricultural cycles and adapted to the changing natural landscape.[150] With all these transformations their everyday religious practice had to be subjected to the new conditions. For some, this meant a loss of contact and familiarity with the landscape through daily engagement. Working the land as hired labour, people were unable to settle permanently in a certain space to live in it. On demand, labour forced workers to leave their villages to settle temporarily in new, unknown places leaving behind relatives, acquaintances and places. This continuous displacement meant the inability to harvest and eat from it, to engage with it in an accumulative and intimate manner, to transit freely from plot to plot, and to visit sacred sites. All which had important consequences in the everyday life of the peasantry and in the material culture that resulted from it.

The rural culture of the peasants remained dominant in both villages and towns of Palestine. The peasants who ended up living in urban settings, had to adapt to the new religious landscape that included an heterogeneous population. The material expressions of the religious practice that resulted from these new engagements in towns led to the use of amulets that added elements from urban settings. Clients had now to turn to practitioners living in towns to get their amulets. Amulets were manufactured with the materials available in town markets, or seemed to have come from abroad, and their activation was now in relation to the saints/sanctuaries in the town.

The use of amulets in urban settings was not exclusive to the peasants. Among Canaan's amulets there are a few with what he distinguished as European manufacture. They come from members of Jerusalem's bourgeoisie, many of whom still used amulets as part of healing remedies. They are a pendant made of porcelain,[151] two drop-shape blue beads used against the evil eye,[152] and a pendant with a particular technique of silver and stone inlay.[153] These amulets were obtained in Jerusalem, and although they are not representative of the material in his collection, show an interesting aspect of urban everyday religious life that has to be explored more. Ritual and prayer seemed to have continued in relation to sanctuaries, with people seeking protection from saints. Forms of traditional healing and the use of amulets seemed to have remained, but now it incorporated aspects of urban material life.

Another change that affected rural Palestine was brought by those like Taufiq Canaan; Palestinians who had been trained in missionary schools in urban settings and interacted with the

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[150] I. Pappe, *Op.Cit.*, p.14

[151] Amulet no. 20 from the catalogue.

[152] Amulet no. 371 from the catalogue. Cfr. Canaan's handwritten notes on cardboards.

[153] Amulet no. 21

rural population. European forms of medicine were firstly introduced through Ottoman institutions, and later by the Western missions through the foundation of schools and hospitals, that played an important role in the formation of new bodies of degree-holder physicians or *médecins diplômées.*[154] These institutions contributed to the awareness of the existence of an autochthonous medico-religious culture, and tried through new infrastructure to regulate education and medical treatment. Education-wise Western schooling introduced a new religious and medical locus. biomedicine —as we will refer to this form of medicine from now on— targeted what the indigenous population had been treating for centuries, although in a different way.[155] Following biomedical logic and language, *illness* was replaced by *disease* and *healing* by *cure.* This new conceptualisation preferred treatment discarding all possibilities of using amulets, which were rendered superstitious.

Although Western medicine spread fast under the missions' sponsorship, sources show that traditional medicine was not easily replaced by western methods. In fact, it seems that biomedicine had a difficult time finding its way in the medical practices of the people, particularly in the countryside. The reason for this, I argue, was the strong connexion that existed between the traditional medical culture, the people's cosmology and engagement with the land, which was mainly expressed in their religious practice, and could not easily be replaced by foreign not-yet-known innovations. Based on this, the conceptualisation of illness, healing and efficacy in the traditional medical culture did not exactly parallel that of biomedicine, making a one-on-one replacement of the one by the other difficult.

Instead, both forms of targeting diseases seem to have coexisted. With time, some of the biomedical procedures were integrated and became part of people's medical culture. In the same way there is plenty of evidence that *médecins diplômées* had to adapt their biomedical treatments to

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[154] P. Bourmaud has analysed the phenomenon of the *médecins diplômées* and the creation of new hierarchies that disrupted the traditional social structure of traditional practitioners. Cfr. P. Bourmaud, *«Ya Doktor»: Devenir médecin et exercer son art en «Terre sainte», une expérience du pluralisme médical dans l'Empire ottoman finissant (1871-1918)*

[155] Biomedicine is a branch of medical science that applies biological and physiological principles to clinical practice. It has been the dominant health system for more than a century. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biomedicine. It is a term that emerges in the 19th century to distinguish between traditional medicine and a medicine that tackles the removal of pathology or the repairing of physiological malfunctions. The criticism here is that biomedical inquiry considers its standards universal for defining and measuring other kinds of medicine, because it has been conceived as universal with a culture-free language of science that could be applicable in any case. Cfr. J. B. Waldram, "The Efficacy of Traditional Medicine: Current Theoretical and Methodological Issues" p. 604-607.

the fact that amulets were still in use, and they were quite often used in parallel. Even nowadays, these traditional forms of healing are still used next to biomedical treatment.

2.4 Everyday religion in Palestine

By the end of the 19th century, the missionary institutions had been successful in founding schools in towns where a modern reformulation of religion began to spread among the first generation of Palestinian students. Missionary schools created a new reading public.[156] In contrast to the traditional oral culture that had prevailed for centuries, reading was necessary to access the religious texts that became the foundation of the new approach to religion. According to Grehan, this textual approach to religion came "announcing its arrival in three interdependent movements: 1. the sharpening of sectarian consciousness; 2. the cultivation of a new religious discipline, more introverted; 3. the shift toward a more strictly scriptural interpretation of religious tradition." [157]

This reformulation of religion did not move in an even pace. In contrast with missionary schools mushrooming in Jerusalem and targeting the urban bourgeoisie, most of rural Palestine remained without access to schools. This lack of infrastructure allowed traditional forms of prayer and healing to continue. In fact the first half of the 20th century while Canaan formed his collection, everyday expressions of piety were still based on an agrarian religiosity. Only with the spread of religious infrastructure in the countryside after 1948, and in the case of the Gaza District until the time of Nasser in the 1960s,[158] a new form of religiosity based on the knowledge of religious texts took shape. This textual education replaced older forms of knowledge transmission, in which family members played the main role in teaching forms of prayer and healing practices. Moreover, in the 1980s the spread of political Islam in most Muslim countries reached Palestinian men who emigrated for work. Palestinians commuting to Israel or emigrating to the Gulf Countries changed their attitude towards traditional practices, which started to be question and corrected according to the religious texts, or to their textual interpretation.

Interesting to mention is the fact that during my interviews in villages in the West Bank, I notice a difference in attitude towards the use of amulets between men and women. On the one hand, many men were reluctant to talk about amulets and immediately referred to them as *ḥarām*.

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[156] J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*, p.197

[157] J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*, p.196

[158] R. Hammami, *Transformations in Religiosity and Labour*, p.111

Women, on the other hand, were knowledgeable about the use of amulets and talked about how they were used in the past. They had stopped using them because "they were not considered Islamic". This aspect of the use of amulets needs further exploration, but seems to be related to what Jamil Hilal identifies as the phenomenon of emigration and conservatism that Palestinian men experienced after the occupation.[159]

2.4.1 Agrarian religion

The amulets that Canaan collected can be very well understood in the context of an *agrarian religion*. Coined by James Grehan in his book *Twilight of the Saints,* it refers to the everyday religion or the total of daily religious behaviour that had been "present in the Levant for centuries and that entered into its historical twilight in the 18th century and ceased gradually."[160] This kind of agrarian religiosity was rooted in a synthesis of naturalism and Byzantine Christian traditions of saints and apostles, and from the 7th century onwards it had been penetrated by Islamic saintly figures and signs.[161] Grehan's *agrarian religion* places the religious culture of the peasants at the centre, defying the notion of centrality of the official religion and its impact on everyday religious practice. He focuses on the religiosity as it was lived by "ordinary" people, not as prescribed by scripture and its defendants.

Although Grehan's agrarian religion comes from his analysis of the religious culture prior to Canaan's collecting activity, it is useful for the purpose of this thesis. First, because the amulets present elements of this agrarian religious culture; second, because they represent the adaptability and flexibility of religion when analysed in its everyday form challenging the notion of rootedness and immobility that has been attributed to Palestinian folklore.[162] Everyday religion stands against the nostalgic idea of the demise of a Palestinian village folk culture showing instead the assimilative, adaptable and fluid nature of an everyday religion that resonates with historical events but also with daily meaning-making processes and engagement with the world.

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159 J. Hilal, "Emigration, Conservatism, and Class Formation", p.190

160 This approach to religion through its everyday form is common in the study of contemporary phenomena, but it is not applied to past centuries. Cfr. J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*., p.17

161 R. Hammami, *Transformations in Religiosity and Labour,* p.46

162 For a critical position regarding the notion of rootedness among the fellahin Cfr. S. McElrone, "Villagers on the Move: Re-thinking Fallahin Rootedness in Late-Ottoman Palestine." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54

The term *agrarian religion* comes from the fact that it emerged and developed first in rural, agrarian societies. Since prior to the 19th-century most of Palestine's population was agricultural,[163] the peasants' every-day religion was the dominant expression, both in the countryside and in urban centres. In towns and cities, most of the population had not yet been exposed to literacy, keeping them "trapped within the constraints of an oral culture, and obstinate in their commitment to values and customs that were not very far removed from those of the peasantry."[164] The prevailing presence of an agrarian culture in the urban milieu, was also facilitated by the long history of interactions inter and intra towns and villages, but also by the fact that the distinction between rural and urban ways/culture even within towns remained quite distinct.[165]

Grehan has pointed out that Palestine's everyday religion had space to operate due to the absence of institutionalised religion. This was the case for Greater Syria, which as a peripheral province of the Ottoman Empire did not benefit from a religious infrastructure, allowing religious practice find a freer space to develop. Prior to the 19th century, the absence of institutions and regulation of ritual practice was a widespread reality, not only in the Palestinian countryside, but also in the towns.[166] The absence of churches, mosques, and madrasas meant that there was no central administration interfering with the religious culture of most inhabitants of the Levant. Some towns had a *zawiyya,*[167] which was the only religious institution that regulated prayer and rituals for protection and healing.[168] In villages, the authority of local sheikhs and the sporadic visits of recognised living saints from the towns maintained regular forms of devotion. As for the bedouins, the regulation of such rituals had been in the hands of the elderly women of each tribe.[169] The everyday practice remained in motion, changing and incorporating elements in every personal

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[163] This is evidenced in the censuses of 1922 and 1931 carried out by the British government. For a detailed demographic analysis of the population of Palestine based on these two censuses, as well the report on the population of Palestine of 1947, Cfr. J. L. Abu Lughod, "Demographic Transformation of Palestine"

[164] J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*, p. 15

[165] This is the main thesis of S. McElrone, *Ibidem.*

[166] This is based on Grehan's analysis of the Ottoman Salname-yi Vilayet-i Suriye, that shows the unevenness in the distribution of houses of worship according to urban and rural areas. Cfr. J. Grehan, *Op. Cit.,* p.29

[167] *zawiyya pl. zawāyā:* A small cupolaed mosque erected over the tomb of a Muslim saint, with teaching facilities and a hospice attached to it, usually the establishment of a religious order." Cfr. H. Wehr, Dictionary of Modern Standard Arabic, p. 450

[168] B. Masters, "A World of Scholars and Saints", in *The Arabs in the Ottoman Empire, 1516-1918: A Social and Cultural History*, p.112

[169] Popper-Giveon, A., Abu-Rabia, A., & Ventura, J. "From White Stone to Blue Bead: Materialised Beliefs and Sacred Beads among Bedouin in Israel", p.145



Figure 8. Pilgrimage certificate in Arabic with stamps of the Jewish holy sites with their corresponding name in Hebrew.
Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets
Photo taken by the author

interpretation and performance but keeping elements that had been part of local religiosities.

The dominant position of this agrarian religious culture within the full range of ideas, attitudes and activities was shared and regarded as conventional in rural and urban areas, within different social classes, among Muslims, Christians and Jews, men and women. The representatives of the religious establishment, that is to say, priests, rabbis, sheikhs, and *'ulamā'* interacted differently with this religious culture. Some of them "were involved in intellectual exercises aimed at adapting religion to a developing reality, other senior clerics worked in the opposite direction, adapting reality to a fundamental and inflexible interpretation of religious texts."[170] Some '*ulamā'* with their incomparable expertise in religious matters, had various responsibilities, and "participated in the ubiquitous oral culture around them, but kept a second culture, exclusive and literate, almost entire to themselves".[171]

The major transformations within the economic and political sphere that took place in 19th- and early-20th century Palestine had an impact on the way agrarian religion was lived in major towns and in the countryside. The population's re-accommodation, a consequence of foreign immigration, internal displacement, and change of land tenure and urban centralisation, altered the regulatory instances and added new forms of religious practice.

2.4.2 Inter-confessionality and the fluid nature of everyday religion

The religious culture of Palestine included diverse possibilities that had coexisted in the Levant for centuries. By this, I refer first to the different forms of religious practice in towns and villages based on the degree of institutionalisation that religious infrastructure allowed and second, to the confessional possibilities, namely to be Jew, Christian, Muslim or Druze. The practical dimension of religion, which was for a large part unregulated, was what accounted for the religious diversity and "inter-confessional" interactions in Palestine. In other words, the everyday rituals, material expressions of piety and social interactions resulted from individual and communal engagements with sacred places and sacred histories. Mediated by different kinds of regulatory instances such as family, village hierarchies, sheikhs, and visiting sufis, these engagements were defined more by geographical location than by the allegiance to one or another religious tradition. This is not to say that a transnational religious consciousness did not exist or did not contribute to define self-

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[170] I. Pappe, *Op. Cit.*, p.16

[171] J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*, p.5

identities, but expressions of religious piety were circumscribed, before anything else, locally and then regionally.

These forms of piety permeated the life of people regardless of gender, religious affiliation or social position. Expressed on an everyday basis, this kind of religiosity had its foundations in traditional worship but also in everyday needs, making it so lively. Characterised by an essential worldliness and pragmatism, it used propitiatory magic, reverence for miracle workers, nature and spirit cults, and different forms of ancestor veneration.[172] Its pragmatic nature did not know institutions and religious sectarianism until the 19th century.

Inter-confessionality is probably the aspect of this agrarian religious culture that attracts more attention because of the contemporary tensions between ethnic and religious communities in most parts of the world. The inter-confessional character of Palestine's religious culture that prevailed before the 20th century, and continued to be part of the everyday religious practice even after 1947, discloses that the Palestine-Israeli conflict is not based on a religious discord.

Inter-confessionality, however is a concept that needs further explanation. The idea of confessions as differentiated religions or forms of it, separate from each other has been criticised in recent scholarship on religious studies. As Carl W. Ernst points out, the concept of religions as ideologies competing for world domination disclosed the historicity of our notion of confession.[173] Inter-confessionality proposes that confessions can mingle and interact, but it still assumes that confessions exist in a pure differentiated state.[174] In this regard, if religious human practice is seen as fluid and accumulative, confession becomes a useless term, so does inter-confessionality.

Confessionality however exists as a concept, and so does inter-confessionality as a tool to explore how these confessions interacted. It began with the creation of the millet system, a state project of categorisation of religious communities applied in 1830 by the Ottoman state. This classificatory system was already part of the modern reformulation of religion that gave prominence to the scripture becoming the framework for prayer, ritual and religious experience.[175] Its aim was to classify the population and exercise more control over communities of non-Muslims (Christians and Jews). However in practice, in the periphery of the Ottoman lands, this differentiation of religious community was difficult to demarcate. The study of Palestinian villages, the agrarian

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[172] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.192

[173] C.W. Ernst, "Situating Sufism and Yoga", p.18

[174] C. W. Ernst, *Op. Cit.* p 18

[175] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.197

religion, and the use of amulets discloses that the millet system did not function in the same way as it (probably) did in the administrative/political centres of the Ottoman Empire.

During the late Ottoman and Mandate periods, the Palestinian society began to experience major changes regarding its religious composition. By analysing five mayor pilgrimage sites, Philippe Bourmaud has distinguished two dimensions of the religious practice that affected the development of "inter-confessionality". On the one hand the formal practice introduced by religious institutions led to a strict regulation and set the differentiation of religious practice between confessional groups. In the case of pilgrimage and religious celebrations, these became object of a strict police control while the conflicts that arose in them were not much based on confession as on community.[176] On the other hand, however, "the festive dimension of religious practice and forms of popular religiosity" kept its inter-confessional character until 1947 as shown in the pilgrimages and celebrations in al-Nabi Musa, al-Nabi Rubin, al-Nabi Samwil, the Tomb of Rachel, and Mar Elias.[177] It was with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 that the period of religious festivals and saint visitation around regional and national *awliyā'*[178] came to an end. This established new national boundaries that impeded Palestinians to access sacred sites[179] and provoked the displacement of Palestinians to neighbouring countries, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, making it impossible for them to keep visiting the tombs of the local *awliyā'*.

In the countryside the persistence of a fluid agrarian culture, —or better said, the absence of a strict confessional differentiation, even after the establishment of religious institutions in the urban areas, responded to different reasons. First, the lack of religious infrastructure in the countryside allowed the persistence of undifferentiated spaces, forms of prayer and supplication revolving around religious sites that had been common for all. The interactions in these sites, however, did not respond to an ecumenism but to the "possibilité spatiale de se recuellir, de tenir une liturgie ou du moins des rites.. et cela signifie la possibilité d'y pratiquer sa religion, à côte et dans la même temps qu'un croyant d'une autre foi ou d'une autre confession."[180] Moreover, these

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[176] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor,* p.24

[177] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor,* p.8

[178] *walī* pl. *awliyā':* a man close to God, holy man, saint. Cfr. H. Wehr, *Dictionary,* p. 1289

[179] For a detailed narration of the transformation of the landscape, the occupation, appropriation and destruction of sacred sites in pre 1948 Palestinian territories Cfr. M. Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948*, California: University of California Press, 2000.

[180] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p. 11

places were visited by all not because they provided a setting for the an inter-confessional religious practice (of differentiated religious communities), but because they were spaces that superseded sectarian affiliation. Seeking the intercession of Mar Elias or St. George (al-Khader) in the next extract was beyond the Muslim, Christian or Jewish affiliation of their practitioners.

> "One Muslim woman, cradling her gasping infant at the shrine of the prophet Saba in Rashaya, called out to her mother, "To whom shall I vow?" Her mother's response pithily summed up the eclecticism of folk religiosity: "They are all God's prophets. Vow to whom you please." Her daughter then called upon St. Elias, and promised to baptise her son at the local church if the Christian saint were to make him better. The little boy quickly recovered, prompting his grateful mother to keep her word." [181]

Behind this fluidity between religious communities in terms of practice, there was an acknowledgement that "whatever their doctrinal differences, their religions sprung from the same tradition, replete with prophets, legends and landmarks which appeared in all the holy books."[182] — As Salim Tamari says, this was a kind of acknowledgement of an Abrahamic or even pagan practice (in the case of al-Khader).[183] So, as illustrated in the above-mentioned passage of the Muslim woman who decided to make a vow to the Christian saint Elias aiming to get his *baraka,*[184] and accepted to baptise her child to "gain the spiritual protection of prophet Jesus to combat threatening spirits and keep the baby safe,"[185] shows the appropriation by one religious community of the other's saintly figures and the recognition of the efficacy of other's rituals. This phenomenon has always been present in the development of religion. The case of Nabi Musa and Nabi Ruben appropriated by Muslims, Simon the Just appropriated by Jews, al-Khader originally a pagan figure, but appropriated by Muslims and Cristians, all disclose the recognition of the fluid nature of everyday religious practices.

Another reason of the prevalence of such fluid nature comes from the fact that the agrarian religious culture was shaped in the everyday engagement with the landscape by living in it and living from it, limiting the area of activity to the immediate lands and their features; creating small-

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[181] J. Grehan, *Op. Cit.*, p.178

[182] J. Grehan, *Op. Cit.*, p.182

[183] Personal correspondence, October 2020

[184] *baraka* pl. *barakāt*: blessing, benediction, Cfr. H. Wehr, *Dictionary*, p.67

[185] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.178

scale geographies based on human action. The agrarian religious culture was a feature common to all the Levant. However, although peasants and bedouins had established networks with other localities, and their mobility had made them aware of the existence of saints, amulet-makers and sheikhs in other villages and towns, specific cults and preference for some saints was determined more by proximity and familiarity. Particularities in rituals and the use of certain material objects as part of healing practices, responded to geographical location rather than trans-geographical religious affiliation. This meant that, there were more commonalities in religious practice and expressions of piety among Muslims, Christians and Jews of the same village than among Sunni Muslims from different parts of the Levant.

2.4.3 Amulets for all

Within these religious engagements many amulets become quite difficult to define in terms of religious denomination. If strict separation of religious practice did not occur at all times, then how did material objects function within these indistinctive and fluid spaces/rituals? The engagement with the landscape and the awareness of a common religious history and its symbols, kept sanctuaries and other ritual sites as spaces for mingling and interaction. Material objects were manufactured, sanctified and activated in these spaces. They were used for practical reasons, for the power they conveyed, and could later be passed on to other people.

Examples of amulets that were available for anyone are those that came from pilgrimage sites. The *ziyāra*[186] to sacred places and their corresponding celebrations were moments when mingling and interaction took place in a more intense form. Only a few sites would serve only one community. People from different origins converged in pilgrimage sites creating a very unique space that involved the circulation of objects used to express religious piety. Among the Canaan amulets there are some items that disclose the pragmatic nature of amulet use, and how one same object could be regarded efficacious by pilgrims regardless of their religious affiliation.

From the group of pilgrimage certificates, there is one that deserves our attention, it stands out for its Arabic and Hebrew inscriptions and depictions of Muslim and Jewish sacred sites. Catalogued by Canaan under no. 945, it is a block-printed certificate. On the one side it contains a description of the places that a Muslim pilgrim should visit during *ziyāra* to Jerusalem and associated sites. The description is in Arabic and contains a long list of sites related to prophets (some Biblical), companions of Prophet Muhammad, and sheikhs. At the top of the page, the

[186] visitation/ pilgrimage to a shrine

formula *bismillah al-raḥmān al-raḥīm*[187], two stamps with the *shahāda,*[188] and a picture of the Dome of the Rock appears. The opening formula and the text content point to the fact that it was meant for a Muslim visitor/pilgrim. In the margins of the certificate, however, there are 10 stamps of images of Jewish holy places with their respective names in Hebrew. The ones that are readable are: Rachel's Tomb, the Machpelah or the Abrahamic Mosque in Hebron, the Tomb of Absalom, the Tomb of Prophet Samuel and King David's Tomb. These stamps were probably added to the Muslim certificate for Jewish visitors only. On the other (reverse) side, the certificate has a handwritten text that certifies the completion of the *ziyāra* and many other stamps. The issuers of these documents as it reads at the bottom were *'Abd al-Raḥmān* and *'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī*. They probably issued them to Jewish pilgrims as well because there was no Jewish authority who could issue certificates to validate the pilgrimage to these specific sites. The certificate seems to have been folded many times into a small square. We know from Canaan that this certificate was carried as an amulet by a pilgrim. The identity of the pilgrim however, is not given; the pilgrim could have been a Muslim, who visited the Jewish sites or acquired the certificate already with the stamps on it. Another possibility is that the pilgrim was a Jew, and did not consider the content of the amulet, such as the Islamic formulae, an impediment to use it. For the Muslim or Jewish pilgrim the amulet worked because of its connexion with the sites that he/she had visited, but the other elements on it could have added power to it. There is no doubt that the pilgrim recognised the authority of the issuer and the value that this certificate acquired once it was signed and stamped.

Another amulet used by people from different religious backgrounds, was the *ḥirz ḥalīb* (milk bead). Obtained in the Milk Grotto in Bethlehem, these amulets were believed to contain a beneficial power. Canaan registered that they were extensively used by women from different religious backgrounds. Visited mainly by women, this place was considered sacred due to its connection with the Virgin Mary. By visiting the place, women would take pieces of the white limestone from the cave for their supposed capacity to boost milk during lactation. This limestone could be engraved with Christian iconography as exemplified in some of Canaan's items.[189] There were also beads made of whitish stones other than limestone, but they would be referred to as milk beads too, probably due to the colour. This variation in milk beads might point to a high demand for such beads. It is not clear if they were also obtained at the Milk Grotto since they are not made of

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[187] In the name of God, the greatest, the most merciful.

[188] The profession of faith: There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God.

[189] See complete list of amulets/materials in Table 1 of the Appendixes.



Figure 9. Pendant *(maskeh)* with Arabic and Hebrew inscriptions, catalogued no. 95 of the Tawfik Canaan Collection.
Photo credit: Birzeit University Museum

limestone —probably these were effective due to their colour and to their power that after all came from their association with the holy site.

A third example is amulet no. 95 (Figure 8). It is a drop-shape *maskeh*[190] made of gold-plated silver inscribed on both sides. On one side the inscription is only in Arabic and on the other the inscriptions are in both Arabic and Hebrew. The Arabic reads on the top *yā ḥāfiẓ*, on the right *yā kāfī*, on the left *yā shāfī*. These three ways of addressing God or a saint refer to their protective and healing power. The Hebrew: *eloha* (in the centre surrounded by a circle), *aleija ayn* (at the bottom), probably alludes to God who sees everything and protects from the evil eye. Canaan bought this pendant in Jerusalem in 1913. He did not mentioned where, but probably in a shop that sold this kind of jewellery. The fact that the pendant is inscribed in both languages points to two possible explanations. The first possibility is that the availability of these kinds of pendants might have

190 In MSA *maska* pl. *masakāt*: grip, hold; in Palestinian Arabic *maskeh* pl. *mawasik:* a piece of jewellery that hands from a chain around the neck.

targeted a very particular group of clients, namely the Arab Jews who were acquainted with religious formulae in both languages. The second option is that these pendants might have been manufactured with the intention to put them on the market purposely making them available to different kinds of clients. This would enable the pendant's quick sale. Both those who read Arabic and those who used Hebrew could use the pendant for the protection it offered. Sold in Jerusalem, these kinds of pendants must have also been offered to foreign pilgrims looking for souvenirs.

2.5. Internal conceptualisations of illness, healing and efficacy

Different attitudes towards adopting new, keeping old, and replacing traditional forms of treatment are found among Canaan's interlocutors. These attitudes refer to individual and communal mechanisms of adapting to a changing reality and of finding spiritual and physical solutions to everyday problems. Amulets were part of everyday solutions and functioned within an internal logic of adaptation to new conditions. In order to understand amulets as healing and protective objects, it is important to dedicate a section to the conceptualisation and articulation of illness, healing and efficacy.

2.5.1. Illness and healing

In 1918, Dr. E. W. G. Masterman, while executing a research project for the Palestine Exploration Fund, identified the following diseases in Palestine: malaria, backwater fever, enteric fever, smallpox, scarlet fever, diphtheria, dysentery, cholera, plague, erysipelas, rheumatism, rheumatoid arthritis, tuberculosis, phthisis, leprosy, rickets, nervous diseases, diabetes, intestinal worms, cancer, congenital deformities, skin diseases, ophthalmia, trachoma and cases of death during labor.[191] These diseases had long been in Palestine the main cause of death among peasants and bedouins. Categorised differently than Masterman had done, traditional healers had grouped the diseases based on common origin and symptoms, and had developed forms of prophylaxis and healing according to the main cause of the illness with remedies targeting its source.

Between Masterman's approach and that of traditional healers lay different explanations of the manifestation of disease and its underlying causes. During the years Canaan collected the amulets, he noted that the origin of most illnesses and ailments was believed to come from two main sources: the evil eye and supernatural forces (including the *jinns* or evil spirits). Few ailments

[191] E. W. G. Masterman, "Hygiene and Disease in Palestine in Modern and in Biblical Times", p.61



Figure 10. Cardboard with amulets organised under the category of blue beads (as indicated on the top margin). Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

were reported to have come as punishment from misbehaviour in a *maqām,*[192] or as a result of a spell. What follows is the description of the sources of illness and the different kinds of amulets that in Palestine were used to counteract them.

The '*ayn* (evil eye) or *'ayn al-hasūd* (envious eye) could originate by the gaze of any person involuntarily or purposely with the aim of affecting the person. According to Evans-Pritchard, in different cultures the evil eye is associated with particular social groups often related to gender and kinship. It is an hereditary phenomenon, often based on envy of material or social standing.[193] Finneran would argue that, in the Ethiopian case, it has its roots in patron-client relations, where the subjugated client being envious conveys the evil eye towards his patron who belongs to a higher

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[192] *Maqām* is a holy site that can be a tomb or a memorial of a saint. For the usage of the term see subchapter *2.6.2. Dust of prophets and patriarchs.* Cfr. T. Canaan. *Mohammedan Saints and Sactuaries*, p.247.

[193] E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, p.100

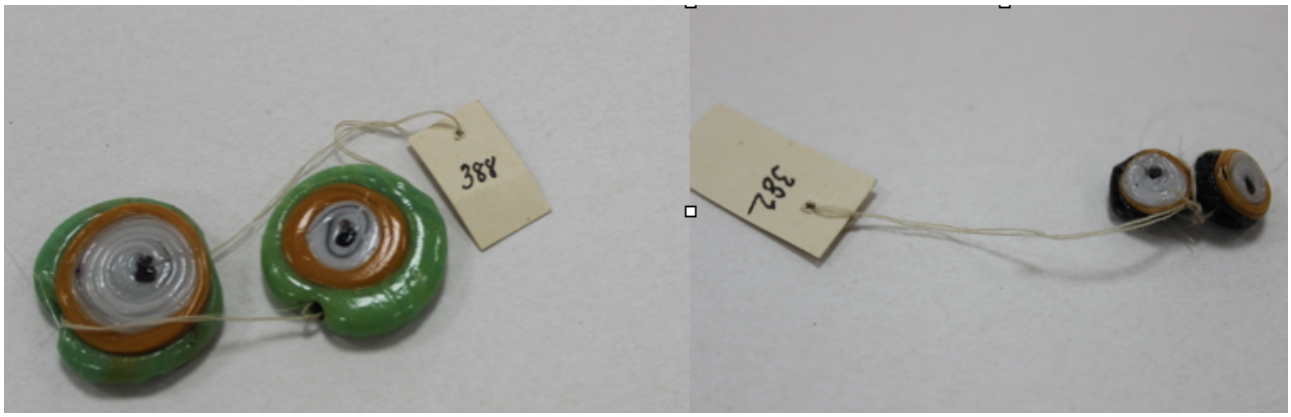


Figure 11. *Khalīlī* glass eyes of different sizes (see size in relation to the tag): no. 382 *'ayn al-dīk* or rooster eye and no. 388 *'ayn al-jamal* or camel eye.
Photos taken by the author

social class and possesses wealth.[194] Evil eye, seems to appear in any situation of perceived inequality.

In Palestine, the belief that people with blue eyes posses the ability to give the evil eye, explains why it is mainly combated with the use of amulets that contain blue beads. Following the logic of homeopathy where the same poison that causes disease can also have a healing effect, blue beads –representing the eyes, are used as remedies to cancel the effect.[195] Human-made representations of eyes included blue beads of different kinds. The most commonly used was *khirzat al-bizilla* (pea bead), named after its round shape that resembled a pea. This was made and sold to be used in amulets, set in necklaces, with other pieces of silver jewellery like amulet cases, or coins (Fig. 9). According to Nazmi al-Jubeh, this type of bead was also sold to be used in fishing nets.[196]

Other blue beads that were meticulously manufactured to resemble eyes were those made of *khalīlī* glass, widespread in the early 20th century. They were manufactured in Hebron but available around Palestine. These were flat beads made of four concentric layers or circles of different colours resembling an eye. The outer circle could be blue, green or black; the outer middle circle was yellow/orange; the inner middle cycle was always white, and the inner circle which in most cases was just a dot, was always black since it represented the pupil of the eye. These *khalīlī* glass

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[194] N. Finneran, "Ethiopian Evil Eye Belief and the Magical Symbolism of Iron Working", p. 427

[195] T. Canaan, *Auberglaube*, p.58

[196] N. al-Jubeh, "Hebron Glass A Centuries-old Tradition." *This Week in Palestine*, Jan. 2007.

eyes included different kinds: the small ones attested in green, blue, light blue and dark brown were called *'ayn al-dīk* (rooster eye) or *'ayn al-'ifrīt*[197]; the medium-size ones, *'ayn al-qā'ūd* (dromedary eye); and the big ones, *'ayn al-jamal* (camel eye) (Fig. 10); a kind of bead with three pupils, called in Palestinian colloquial *imtallat*[198]*;* and some that resemble a blind eye, without a pupil, were called *'ayn 'amyā'* or *'ūra* .[199] Once the evil eye was given to someone, it could manifest itself in different illnesses and symptoms. Although there is not much information about these glass eyes, their use might have corresponded to the severity of the symptoms. Objects with eye-shapes could also be taken from nature, such as shells, stones with circular shapes or seeds, and used to counteract the evil eye.[200] Amulets had to be made as a complete remedy, not only to protect the person from the evil eye, but also to heal the effects that it had on the individual. Therefore, these natural eye-shape eyes could be used without modification or by placing them in a metal case or fastened together with other amulets.[201]

The second origin of illness was the affection by the *jinns, al-arwāḥ al-sharīra* (evil spirits) and demons such as *al-'ifrīt*, *al-qarīna*, *al-ghul*. From all these, *al-qarīna* appeared as the most feared demon. Most amulets collected by Canaan used against evil from a non-human source, were precisely those targeting this female demon.[202] *Al-qarīna* is still believed to affect children causing their death. From Canaan's notes it is possible to distinguish a wide variety of amulets used to protect children from her: from watermelon seeds, pieces of tin, blue beads, rags (previously tied in a holy tree or in a tomb), to the case of a medallion with Christian iconography set together with an Ottoman coin and a blue bead. Most of these amulets worked by means of being seen and thus they were attached to the children's caps or clothes. Other kinds of amulets that targeted evil spirits and *jinn* were made to produce sounds while worn, like little bells.

Amulets do not only target the origin of illness, they are also used to cure the illness itself. In these cases they no longer work as protective but as healing means. Following the law of similarities, they often include herbs and stones with a colour similar to that of the symptom. So for

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197 T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.61

198 The correspondent Arabic word for *imtallat* is *muthallath*, which means triple, threefold.

199 The absence of pupil implies that the eye has no effect, and it might have been used only for aesthetic reasons. Cfr. T. Canaan, *Aberglaube,* p.61; See catalogue no. 384, 390, 391, 404-406, 414

200 Among Canaan's amulets we find *'ayn baqara* a kind of dried fruit (*no. 783,786)*, *'ayn al-hirr* a chatoyant white stone (no. 116, 331, 569, 1357)

201 T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.61

202 For a complete list of amulets and their use see Table 1 in the Appendixes.

instance, red stones are used to control haemorrhage; yellow stones or amber to treat jaundice; and white stones called *ḥajar* or *khirzat ḥalīb*[203] —from the Milk Grotto— to boost the increase of maternal milk during breastfeeding. Other amulets, not necessarily based on their colour, are used due to their intrinsic properties such as *ḥajar al-dam*[204]; *khirzat al-marāra*[205]; *khirzat kabās*[206];

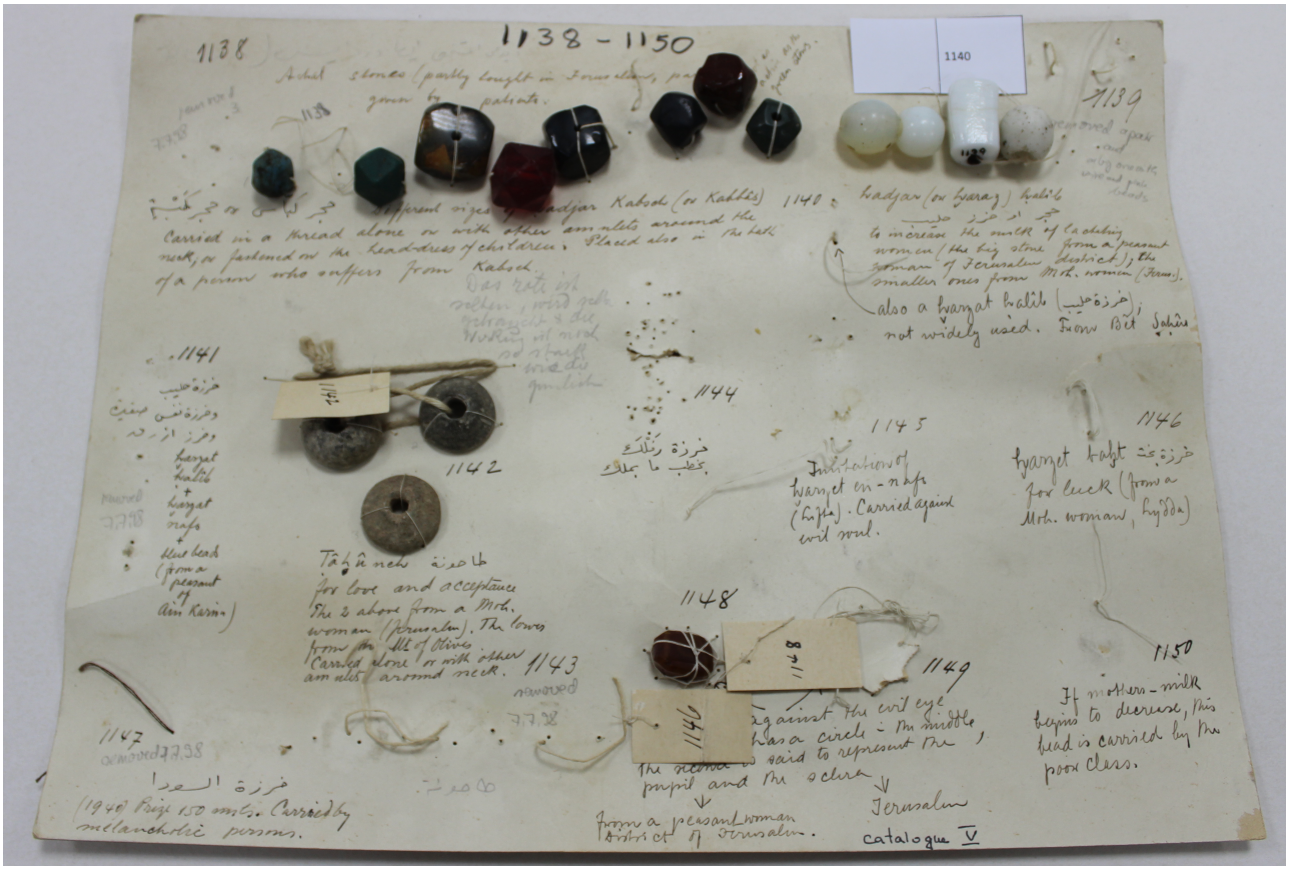


Figure 12. Stones used as amulets. (*ḥajar or khirzat ḥalīb, khirzat kabās, etc.)*
Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

[203] Amulets no. 317, 324, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1150 in the Catalogue.

[204] Blood stone, which is a heliotrope (kind of agate) used to control nose bleeding by pressing it against the front of the head. Amulets no. 196, 581, 608, 613, 581, 585, 920, 1291 in the Catalogue.

[205] *Khirzat al-marāra* bitterness /gallbladder stone, used for illnesses of the gallbladder. It is put in water and then the water is drunk. See amulet no. 594 in the Catalogue.

[206] Pressure beads against high blood pressure. They are hung around the neck of sick people. See no. 1363 in the Catalogue.

khirzat al-ḥalamāt[207]*;* garlic[208]; dates, etc. Some of these remedies have been always used because they are part of *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* or prophetic medicine.[209]

2.5.2 Efficacy

The use of certain materials for prophylactic and therapeutic procedures has been primarily based on the perception that people have of their efficacious nature.[210] Efficacy is measured by the extent to which a remedy can heal. In traditional medicine, being healed is not the equivalent of being cured, and it is not necessary to have a biomedical diagnosis to go through a healing procedure because "the ultimate goal of traditional medicine is not necessarily the elimination of disease"[211], which in biomedical terms, would mean to be cured. What traditional medicine seeks through healing is the restitution of order, which might include alleviating physical pain and repairing the emotional state.

Amulets in this sense have been used to restitute well-being. If an object is used with no result, it is disposed. But what caused an object to be deemed effective? First of all, it had to be manufactured by a well-known and recognised authority on the matter. The psychological predispositions in believing in the healing capabilities of a sheikh, a doctor, etc., may have added to the efficacy of an amulet. Second, efficacy relied on the materials employed, which included those with curative properties like some herbs and minerals, but also materials connected with a holy site. The amulet maker would make the remedy with the right ingredients and proportions/amounts, in the same way that an antidote has to be prepared by mixing different substances in the right amounts. The healer had to be capable of the manipulation of symbols such as naming the patient's problems in order to prepare an amulet suitable for him/her. Third, the efficacy of an amulet relied on the prescription; an amulet had to be used according to carefully followed instructions. The treatment and doses must be instructed by the healer, or by anyone with an acknowledged authority on the matter.

Recent research on the confluence of traditional medicine and biomedicine has shifted the focus to the aspect of efficacy. It "must be seen as fluid and shifting, the product of a negotiated, but

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[207] Nipple bead used against cracking of nipples during the lactation period. See no. 593 in the Catalogue.

[208] Used for its antibacterial properties to cure sty.

[209] The medicine of the Prophet (Muhammad)

[210] For more about how amulets with similar materials as Canaan's are still used until now, see Conclusion

[211] J.B. Waldram, *The Efficacy of Traditional Medicine*, p.605

not necessarily shared, understanding by those involved in the sickness episode, including physicians or healers, patients, and members of the community."[212] Such an understanding of efficacy blurs the strict separation of different forms of medicine unable to cope with each other, and explains how in Palestine traditional forms of protection and healing adopted new biomedical treatment, while in turn biomedical doctors adapted and adopted elements from the traditional forms.

The theoretical difference between both forms of medicine began in the 18th century with Western doctors starting to use lab research and microbiology to explain the cause and cures of illness. Prior to this point, Western medicine shared with traditional medicine the idea that the cause of illnesses was a disequilibrium of substances and humours, and other external causes such as the evil eye, spirit possession, etc. It seems that despite this differentiation, the boundaries were more subtle. Bourmaud has analysed how in the 19th century Palestinian context, doctors trained in Western institutions also had to cope with how their patients understood illness and healing. The latter in turn saw in the doctors with a bio-medical training a new version of the practitioner/sheikh. The following passage taken from Bourmaud's research exemplifies the situation:

> "Je fus conduit au harem du patron du Shilaal, afin de visiter une jeune femme très jolie; après avoir pris son pouls et examiné sa langue, je lui demandai où elle avait mal. Elle mit sa main sur son coeur; je demandai ce dont elle se plaignait. «Mais du mal d'amour, bien sûr,» dit une autre femme; «elle veut vous lui fassiez un talisman pour qu'un jeune homme de Dayr tombe amoraux d'elle.» «Mais je ne suis pas un magicien», dis-je en arabe, «mes braves gens, je puis vous procurer remèdes, mais non vous donner des talismans.» «Ah, ne parle pas ainsi, Hawadgi,» crièrent une demi-douzaine de personne, «nous savons que tu es un magicien, nous savons que tu peux rendre le visage d'une petite femme aussi grosse que la Lune, et nous savons que tu peux faire qu'un homme de Dayr tombe amoureux d'une femme de Shilaal, en écrivant une *waraga* [papier].»[213]

The client requesting an amulet from the doctor, and the doctor probably having prepared one, shows how both sides had to negotiate and adapt. Canaan's engagement with his patients was similar to this. Some patients regarded his bio-medicaments an addition to the traditional cures, others adopted them fully but still used them to counteract evil eye and the effect of evil spirits, which were part of a complex agrarian cosmology as we will explore in the next section.

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[212] J.B. Waldram, *The Efficacy of Traditional Medicine*, p.603

[213] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p.79; Cfr. R. R. Madden, *Travels in Turkey, Egypt, Nubia and Palestine, in 1824, 1825, 1826, 1927*, p.124-125.

2.6 Components of early 20th century Palestine's religious culture

Canaan's amulets functioned within the everyday religious culture of Palestine described above whose internal logic included particular conceptualisations of illness, healing and efficacy. By analysing the parts of the amulets and the way they were used —sometimes interrelated, it is possible to distinguish the different components of the agrarian religious culture, as well as the way they interacted with each other. James Grehan has distinguished three main components: the world of saints or magic men, a sacred landscape full of natural landmarks, and the world of spirits. These were functional layers with each having their own unofficial rules and mechanics based on efficacy and taboos.[214] These three layers, however, were most of the time interwoven. The way people engaged with the saints, the landscape and the spirits shaped forms of piety where material objects played a role. People's engagement with and within these three layers led to the manufacture and use of amulets. Tiny but powerful, the amulets articulated beliefs on the cause and nature of illnesses with practices to protect and counteract them. What follows is the description of these three layers and the amulets related to them.

2.6.1 The world of spirits

The realm of spirits has been acknowledged by peasants and *'ulamā'* to be one of the main causes of illness and death. Some spirits are harmful, but others can be helpful in protecting people. The way they affect humans is diverse and so are the amulets used to counteract them. The spirits are called *jinn* and *al-arwāḥ.*[215] The *jinn* are beings that reflect the complete gamut of humanity: male, female, good, bad, passive, active, and can take human or animal form.[216] Some of them are believed to have helped the prophets in their quest to spread monotheism, such as those who were summoned by Prophet Salomon; they helped him to build Jerusalem and planted rows of *al-mīs (celtis australis)* trees to protect his temple. Good and obedient *jinn,* who have submitted to the will of God, are very powerful. So any part of the landscape associated with them can be turned to for protection. An example of this is the recurrent use of *al-mīs* trees' shade to rest. It is believed that this kind of tree offers protection to herders who stop there during the day. Moreover, the use of *al-*

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214 J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints,* p.165

215 *arwāḥ sing. rūḥ*

216 J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.143

mīs wood from the trees that grow in the esplanade of *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* is widely used in amulets.[217]

Spirits can be the ghosts of local saints who appear in the same shape, and in the places where they once lived.[218] Within the realm of the spirits, *al-arwāḥ al-sharīra* is a generic term for spirits that deceive and are harmful to people. One of their common features is the places where they dwell: wells, caves, or under most kinds of trees. They like these places because they are dark. In their everyday life, peasants visit wells to get water and use trees as resting spots, so they need to be protected against evil spirits that could be around. Evil spirits like darkness and act primarily during the night or when light is very scarce. This is the reason that protection against them is sought through amulets that sound and smell. These two qualities are a priority in the making of amulets against evil spirits. Among Canaan's amulets we find various examples.[219] Smells are a way to drive evil spirits away. Sometimes amulets contain materials with intense odour, like garlic, or are meant to be used in fumigations in which material is burnt. Common fumigations are those with incense, herbs that can be acquired on a particular day of the year or in a religious celebration, and alum. An example of the fumigation with alum is described in detail in the Conclusion, where pieces of alum are used for their cleansing qualities.

Amulets very often contain elements such as loose strings with beads or bells, aimed at producing sound. Well known is the so called *dandūsha,*[220] a tassel-shaped element that in Palestinian Arabic refers to one part of an amulet that contains a few —commonly three loose strings, or three bunches of strings, that produce a sound as they are shaken.[221] The *dandūsha* can be seen in the widely used amulet *'aqd al-badawiya*, which is a bedouin necklace composed of blue, red, white and yellow glass beads combined with alum, cloves, blue hands and flickering coins. Hanging in the lowest part of the necklace is the *dandūsha.* In the example in Canaan's collection it is a piece of alum in pyramidal shape completely covered with small beads (of different

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[217] More about *al-mis* wood can be found in an article M. Garcia Probert, "Twigs in the Tawfik Canaan Collection" in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections.* Leiden: Brill. In process of publication.; For more references to this kind of wood see T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.63

[218] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p. 144

[219] For the amulets with bells, see the complete list of materials in Table 1.

[220] *dandūsha,* pl. *danādīsh*

[221] Amulet no. 420

colours), and three coins hanging from it.[222] Despite their bedouin origin, tassels appear in village accessories showing the influence that semi-nomad bedouins had in villages.[223]

The last group of amulets that target evil spirits and demons are those that include religious prayer or are somehow connected with a saint. These amulets often come from holy sites or are connected to a *maqām*[224] and offer protection through the writing on the amulet or the *baraka* that they posses, as explained in the following section.

2.6.2 Dust of prophets and patriarchs[225]

What better way to get protection from evil than recurring to the power of God, his prophets and *awliyā'*. As mentioned before, the most important religious celebrations were for centuries the pilgrimages to specific sanctuaries on special feast days as well as throughout the year. Visitations to sacred sites had been a central part of the religious life in Palestine even before the organisation of *en masse* pilgrimages to Jerusalem's holy sites during Easter in the 19th century. Saint veneration and the correspondent rituals around saintly figures remained at the core of religious practice for a long time. Some sanctuaries were abandoned only after 1947 with the Israeli occupation of lands, and with the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, which restricted the movement of Palestinians.

Many of the amulets in the Canaan collection were made, activated or used in connection with sanctuaries. Different kinds of sanctuaries in the form of tombs and memorials stand up to this day as architectural landmarks. During my fieldwork in Palestine between 2015 and 2016, I encountered that the usage of the term *maqām* was exclusively for those memorials or places connected to a saint's life. These could be where the saint had passed, sat, slept, eaten, prayed, or performed a miracle. It differed from the term *maqbar,*[226] which was applied to those sites that by common knowledge, contain the saint's physical remains. Shukri Arraf, in his monumental research

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222 T. Canaan, *Auberglaube*, p.57 Examples of this kind of *dandūsha* are the objects no. 424-427 in the Catalogue.

223 In village dresses, tassels are found in the neck opening. Headdress also contain tassels, Cfr. W.K. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.372

224 *maqām,* pl. *maqāmāt* shrine, memorial or tomb of a saint

225 The title of this sub-chapter is taken from J. Grehan's description of Palestine. It evokes the way Palestine has been imagined as the scenario where prophets, patriarchs, and saints have lived and died, and the extent to which they are present, everywhere as dust, in the Palestinian imagination and everyday life. Cfr. J. Grehan, *The Twilight of the Saints*, p.16

226 *maqbar,* pl. *maqābir or* tomb

on sanctuaries in Palestine uses the term *maqām* for all kinds of sites.[227] In this thesis, the term *maqām* is also used as a generic term for both tombs and memorials.

The material evidence of saint veneration is the great number of sanctuaries in Palestine. Shukri Arraf, assessing archival and field data in 1976, located 2571 sites in Palestine, most of them abandoned and in ruins.[228] These sites vary immensely in size en shape, some are merely parked by a pile of stones, others include full-scale rectangular buildings with domes. The architectural diversity of these sites represents on the one hand, a clear hierarchy among the saints, and on the other hand, the economic conditions during their construction. There are Biblical and Qur'anic figures, among whom *al-anbiyā'* (the prophets), have been considered to be on the top of the hierarchy.[229] Their *maqāmāt* are the biggest, as the one dedicated to Prophet Ibrahim Khalil Allah in Hebron, the one of Prophet Moses or Nabi Musa near Jericho, and the one of Nabi Saleh in the town with the same name. Other sites are dedicated to commanders or warriors from Islamic History, including the companions of the Prophet Muhammad, *al-saḥāba*. These companions come from a key moment in the history of Islam, the conquest of the Levant by the righteous caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab in the 7th century. Some of them died and were buried there, others did not die in Palestine, but have a shrine due to their miracles, such as that of Ukasha ibn Mihsan, to whom some of Canaan's amulets are dedicated.[230] Another group of saints are those who fought next to Salah el-Din al-Ayyubi against the Crusaders in the 12th century. Many of his companions died in battle and were eventually venerated as saints.[231] The last group of saints are the friends of God, *awliyā'*. This group includes village founders, local holy men and Sufi sheikhs; persons who were locally well-known for their deeds and spirituality.

From all saintly figures, the *awliyā'* are considered to have the closest relation with the inhabitants of the country. They understand human afflictions, because they were once human beings who lived and experienced their own miseries, difficulties, and diseases. Due to their human

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[227] Cfr. S. Arraf, *Tabaqat maqamaat al-anbiya`wa al-awliya`fi al-ard al-muqadasa*; al-Karmi, Mar'i. *Shifa' al-sudur fi ziyarat al-mashahid wa al-qubur,* ed. 'Adil Salih al-Jatili. Beirut: Maktabat al-Sahwa, 1991.

[228] S. Arraf, *Ibidem*

[229] T. Canaan, *Muhammadan Saints and Sanctuaries*, 272-273

[230] T. Canaan, *Ibid*., p. 298.

[231] Saints connected with Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi are mentioned even nowadays, such as Al-Khadra, a female saint who fought in the battle to liberate Ashkelon from the Crusaders, Cfr. R. Hammami, *Between Heaven and Earth*, p.58

condition, they also know human falsehoods and intrigues.[232] Moreover, since they were locally known, people in their respective villages have been acquainted with their exemplary lives.

The veneration of saints has been motivated by a pragmatic logic. Some saints were more famous than others due to their miracles. The more efficacious a saint's intervention was, the more he was visited. "Sainthood in the agrarian religion was a matter of popular consensus, forged mainly within local communities who were not in the habit of asking for official confirmation. Holiness and proof were considered their own incontrovertible proofs."[233]

2.6.3 Amulets as vehicles for baraka

Engagement with saints takes place mainly in their *maqām*, which are religious and social institutions where prayer, ritual and social interaction takes place.[234] The power of these sites comes through the figure of a saint, who has the capacity for the distribution of *baraka.* According to Chelhod, it is a *bienfasante* power that restores individual physical, emotional and psychological health, but also involves the re-establishment of the social order, primarily based on social solidarity.[235] In order to obtain this power, the visitor to the sanctuary must observe a series of rules and follow a protocol, which have been formulated on communal experiences and a shared knowledge about the personality and qualities of the saint. Some of such experiences circulate in the forms of stories and have a pedagogical aim, to learn to respect the saint's abode. These visits can take place any time of the year, although some shrines are visited more during particular times of the year, when commemorations of the saint are celebrated.

Baraka can be obtained in many ways, by performing a prayer, touching the tomb or lighting candles.[236] For a specific petition or a request to solve a particular problem, a vow must be made. The obtention of *baraka* sometimes involves material objects that are either manufactured or activated in the *maqām*. There are different kinds of natural and human-made objects loaded with *baraka* from the site for general or specific purposes, used as part of traditional remedies for healing. Though they are activated in the proximity of the holy site, once the power is contained

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[232] T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 280

[233] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.62

[234] Although saint veneration has diminished considerably, it is still part of the religious culture of Palestinians. Contemporary cases of saint veneration shows how the role of the saint as a mediator within the community still predominate.

[235] J. Chelhod, "La baraka chez les Arabes ou l'influence bienfaisante du sacre", p.68-88

[236] J. Grehan, *Twilight of the Saints*, p.167

within the objects, they are often carried over and used to distribute the power to distant places and people.[237]

Taufiq Canaan collected amulets related to different *maqāmāt.* Some of them were manufactured in situ and others only sold there. The examples of amulets made at the sites or made with materials meaningful and powerful due to their relation with the sites are many, disclosing different forms of engagement with the saint and the site. Amulet no. 1009, obtained in Medina discloses ways in which people added power to an amulet. It is a pear-shape cone made of clay with two leather strings attached to it. The clay is actually a mix of the sweepings (dust) of the mosque with water. Canaan informed us that it had been placed on the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad and later hung in the house of the owner for protection. These clay amulets were also commonly hung on the headboard of the bed of a sick child.[238] According to Luit Mols, these kinds of amulets are made out of mixing soil or dust of the Prophet's grave, that has been collected by sweeping it, with water from the Zamzam well in Mecca.[239] Canaan mentions that the sweepings could come not only from the inside of the shrine, but also from the surroundings of the site. Sweeping a grave is generally the result of a vow and occurred not only in the Prophet Muhammad's grave. A devotee would promise a saint or prophet to take care of his/her abode in exchange for blessings. The activity of sweeping the graves is mentioned by Canaan as a common activity of cleaning that used to take place in all graves in Palestine.[240] The dust from the sites is believed to have a certain power. In addition, the (Zamzam) water allowed the dust to get a shape suitable to be carried. According to Mols, once the amulet was manufactured, it was hung for extended periods in the shrine of Medina to acquire *baraka*. In this way, the object was loaded with blessings in multiple ways, first by using the sacred dust, second by using the Zamzam water, and third by placing it in the shrine.[241] A similar adding of layers of *baraka* can be detected in Palestine. According to Canaan, once the

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[237] Taken from the lecture *Zamzam-water and the rituals for transferring its benevolent qualities*, presented by Luit Mols at the International Conference Amulets and Talismans in the Muslim World, Leiden University, May 2016.

[238] Description in Arabic taken from the catalogue and translated into English by the author of this research. انجاصة, حجاب اسلامي احضر من المدينة, مصنوع من كناسة الجامع؛ وضع على قبر النبي؛ يعلق في البيوت كحماية كمايوضع على رأس سرير طفل مريض.

[239] Cfr. Luit Mols, description of Volkenkunde Collections. http://collectie.wereldculturen.nl/Default.aspx?ccid=832670

[240] T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p.153

[241] T. Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, p. 99

amulet was made, it was submerged in the blood of a sacrificial victim offered as part of the vow (in a local shrine), allowing the amulet to get even more blessings.[242]

Another group of amulets that exemplify the connexion with a *maqām* are the Musa stones. Connected with the tomb of Prophet Moses these stones known as *ḥajar mūsā,* are used as amulets. They come from the area surrounding the *maqām*. Due to their black colour, they are easy to spot as they contrast with the light brown limestone and sand of the landscape. The stones are of a tarry limestone kind, and used for lighting fire due to bituminous properties. This inflammability is not only explained geologically but also in connexion with Prophet Moses' revelation. al-Asali reports that according to popular knowledge, the fire of the stone in which the Ten Commandments were revealed to Moses was the same kind of mineral.[243] So the stones found at the *maqām* share somehow the same nature and power with the sacred stone.

The power of the Musa stones does not only stem from the intrinsic properties of the mineral, it also comes from the rituals they are part of. Visitors to the *maqām* put the stones in contact with the tomb of Prophet Moses to get *baraka*. The stones can be cut into geometrical shapes to be carried as amulets. Particular are those with a triangular shape that resembled that of the *ḥijāb* (discussed in Chapter 1). Some bear inscriptions, others are only pierced with the purpose



Figure 13. *ḥajar mūsā* with inscription on both sides. Catalogue no.181, Tawfik Canaan Collection
Photo taken by the author

[242] T. Canaan*, Auberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel.* Abhanlungen des Hamburgischen Kolonialinstituts, Band XX, Hamburg: L. Friederichsen & Co, 1914.

[243] K. J. al-Asali, *Mawsim al-nabī mūsā fī filisṭīn*, p.3

to be hung. Item no. 181 shows that the inscribed stones actually address Prophet Moses and God (Fig. 12). On the one side of the stone it reads: *ashhadu ilāh huwa allāh yā muḥammad 'alayka al-salām allāh,* on the other side: *yā shāfī, yā 'āfī, yā nabī mūsā 'alayka al-salām*.[244] Other specimens in the Canaan Collection are pieces of jewellery with the Musa stone. These are triangular or rectangular shaped stones set in silver, to which a *dandūsha* or hanging coins are attached, giving additional power by the sound they produce. So again, we see that in many amulets different protective properties are combined to make it extra powerful.

The power of an amulet in connexion with a sacred site, does not necessarily come from the materials obtained there. Some amulets werere manufactured in other localities, then taken to a certain *maqām* for activation through one of the rituals described before. Traders and pilgrims were all part of the circulation of amulets that ended up being sold in markets adjacent to these sites. The case of the Nabi Musa market is relevant because Canaan obtained many amulets there. The role of this market and the phenomenon of circulation of amulets is further explored in Chapter 4.

2.6.4 Landmarks and the power of nature

In the context of an every-day religion based on the engagement with the agricultural land, the landscape in its natural form also played an important role. Next to the *maqāmāt*, which constitute the human-made aspect of the landscape, natural landmarks are another kind of sites that have been loaded with a special power. In poetic terms we could consider natural landmarks as the spots nature itself chose to highlight. Indeed it seems that this is how the rural population of Palestine looked upon these places, they were favoured over the rest of the landscape and tales full of miracles and heroic deeds that supposedly took place on or near these natural landmarks, circulated. The power of landmarks was believed to originate from two sources, on the one hand from the intrinsic properties of the natural world, and on the other hand, from a saint. If related to a saint, a landmark possessed *baraka*. The power of the saint, not only present inside the shrine, could be found anywhere in the landscape where the saint had passed, sat, or stood. A cave, a strange rock formation, a lonely tree in an empty plain, a grove of a particular kind of tree (not common in the area), etc., were often related to passages in the life of the saints and placed under their protection.

Next to the role of landscape and its natural resources in facilitating the communication with supernatural forces and phenomena, there is the pragmatical aspect of the intrinsic properties of the natural world (mineral, vegetal and animal form). In all cultures plants have been widely used for

[244] "I witness (that) god is God (Allah), oh Muhammad, may the peace of Allah be upon you. Oh healer, oh you who grant well-being." Translation by the author

their healing and prophylactic properties. Ethnobotanical studies have shown to what extent plants are used in traditional remedies.[245] In Palestine, the knowledge about the properties of the plants has been passed on through generations and is based on experiential knowledge. However, the use of certain plants is based on the tradition of *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* or Prophetic medicine, i.e., the healing remedies that Prophet Muhammad used during his lifetime. The most immediate example is the use of dates, particularly from Mecca. Although not endemic to the Levant, they are used in newborn babies according to the sunna of Prophet Muhammad. Considered one of the most nutritious foods, its juice is rubbed on the babies' gums to strengthen their immune system. Dates are also used as remedies for digestive problems. Dates, however, were not always ingested. Sometimes they were just kept. Their association with Mecca and the Prophet Muhammad might have been the reason why they were used as amulets and also entered Canaan's Collection. Some dates that Canaan collected were kept in small carton boxes. Old and dry due to the years, these dates came from Mecca and were believed to have a special power in connexion to the site.

Next to the use of plants, many of the remedies for protection and healing included stones. We have mentioned before that the logic behind their use was that they targeted a particular illness trough the law of similarity. Having the same colour, red stones were used to control and cure haemorrhage; yellow stones to cure jaundice; and so on. This way of using stones could have resulted from the knowledge of intrinsic properties contained in the Arabic genre of *khawāṣṣ* literature. Established in late antiquity, the practice continued in the context of Islam.[246] It contained considerations of the occult properties of plants, animals and minerals and the way they can be used as means for protection and healing. *Khawāṣṣ* is based on the idea of the existence of certain hidden properties, intrinsic to the materials, that become active when used under certain circumstances. The properties of all the natural and mineral world are different, but all behave in accordance with two kinds of principles, that of compatibility and that of incompatibility.[247] Whatever the origin of the logic behind the use of stones, what is clear is that intrinsic properties were only one source of the power of amulets.

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[245] Ali-Shtayeh et al., "Traditional knowledge of wild edible plants used in Palestine (Northern West Bank): A comparative study", *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine*, 2008, 4:13

[246] E. Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination*, p.xix

[247] E. Savage-Smith, *Magic and Divination*, p.xx

2.7 Mixed-material amulets

As analysed in the previous sections, everyday-religion in early 20th-century Palestine was fluid, dynamic and subjected to trial and error. Within its own formulation of illness, healing and efficacy, amulets were made taking into account three different domains: 1. the knowledge of the intrinsic properties of the natural world: minerals, plants, and animals, and their application in re-establishing well-being; 2. the world of spirits and demons that inhabited the landscape and co-habited with humans; and 3. the landscape in relation to saints and prophets' and their respective abodes that included all kinds of *maqāmāt*.

These three domains defined the nature and power of amulets, but being components of one single medico-religious culture they very often overlapped. Through the analysis of the amulets collected by Canaan, it is possible to show the fluid relation of these three domains. Materialised in the amulets, the fluidity appears in mixed-material multifunctional amulets whose components belong to one or another domain, and are combined in particular ways to enhance their power.

Mixed-material amulets, as I call them, are complex objects because they not only combine different elements and materials, but also lead to materials acquiring new and different uses and meaning as a result of this combination. Materials are no longer used as when they were used separately. Rather materials acquire new properties through their combination with others. The same logic is behind the preparation of medications, where components get new curing powers when mixed with others in specific proportions. In the Tawfik Canaan Collection, a small amount of amulets are made of only one material, or at least Canaan preserved them as such; instances are the Nabi Musa stones, other kinds of stones that seem to be used alone, milk beads from the Milk Grotto, and the twigs from *al-mīs* tree. However, most amulets contain various materials/parts.

Among the mixed-material amulets there are particular combinations that appear repeatedly pointing to the fact that they might have been well-known for their efficacy. Catalogued with the following numbers 370, 417, 1029, 1111, 1113, 1114, these amulets comprise three materials: a blue bead, a triangular piece of alum, and a bead of *al-mīs* wood. These three materials could be also used as amulets separately or in combination with other materials. In each way, they would target a different illness or problem.

What follows is the description of these three materials, the way they are used alone and in their respective combination. The first material or part of the amulets is the blue bead. Drawing evidence from the Canaan Collection, blue beads are by far the most common amulet or part of an

amulet. Blue beads are used as a prophylactic measure. They are used under the logic of similarity, in which an object of the same or similar colour counteracts the effect of an ailment coming from anything of that colour. This logic explains why blue beads are used to counteract the evil eye, which is believed to come primarily from people with blue eyes. Because they counteract the evil eye, they are used in amulets in a way they can attract the attention of the eye. In contrast with other materials that target other senses of perception, blue beads are meant to be seen. Blue beads in amulets are pierced and set most of the times with other materials that have striking colors/shapes to be seen, produce a sound, have a strong odour, and/or have flammable qualities. In contrast with other kinds of beads, blue beads —which represent an eye, are mostly used for protection and not for healing. In this sense, blue beads might be combined with other materials with prophylactic purposes, or with materials used in healing remedies. Beads are pierced and used to form chains/ necklaces to be hung around the neck or on the head. The materials employed for the blue beads might be stone or glass, however industrialised beads and amulets circulate as well. [248]

Next to the blue bead, the second part of the amulet is a piece of alum, in Palestinian Arabic called *shabbeh*. Besides the mixed-material amulet under scope, alum is a common material in amulets. The kind of alum that concerns us here is also called potassium alum. Due to its physicochemical properties, it can be used as a water purifier,[249] as a skin astringent and antiseptic, as a natural deodorant by inhibiting the growth of bacteria, and supposedly to reduce haemorrhage. Its main use in traditional medicine is for curing internal and external wounds or irritations by wetting and rubbing it on body tissues. Alum is widely used by barbers (*ḥallāq)* as a disinfecting treatment for shaving wounds.

Due to the belief in its cleansing and purifying properties, alum is part of the world of amulets. It is commonly used for treating people afflicted by the evil eye or evil spirits. Different kinds of procedures are found in Palestine depending on the region. The best documented are the rites of exorcism performed among the Bedouins of the Negev.[250] Aref Abu-Rabia who has done extensive research on amulets among the Bedouins, informs us how alum is used as a medium to know the source of the affection or ailment, and as a catalyser to expel the evil eye from the body. The alum is cut in small pieces and used to scan the patient. After this the alum is burnt and the

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[248] Jonathan Ventura, Ariela Popper-Giveon and Aref Abu-Rabia, "Materialised Beliefs: 'Industrialised' Islamic Amulets", *Visual Ethnography* 3.2 (2014): 30-47.

[249] Samuel D. Faust & Osman M. Aly. *Chemistry of water treatment (2nd ed.)*. Chelsea, MI: Ann Arbor Press, 1999

[250] A. Abu Rabia, *Evil Eye and Cultural Beliefs among the Bedouin Tribes of the Negev,* p.249

shape it takes is interpreted, it is then crushed and smeared on the patient's forehead, elbows and heels; the remaining powder is mixed with water and thrown away.[251] In these rituals, alum cleansing properties are conveyed through the smoke by smelling it and impregnating the body with it. The smoke fills the air with its cleansing properties helping to drive away evil spirits.

In the amulets under scope, alum is shaped in a triangle, pierced and set in a way that can be hung. The triangular shape resembles that of the *hijāb*, which is mentioned in Chapter 1. Abu-Rabia has interpreted pyramidal and triangular-shape materials used in amulets. He says that they are used as geometrical abstractions of the human body, which is composed by a series of triangles where joints are the vertices. His hypothesis comes from a very particular ritual practice in which alum is used to scan the body and identify the cause of the ailment. The healer touches three body parts (the vertices of the triangle) and draws invisible lines with the movement of his hands while grabbing the alum. This scan-based analysis of the human body is extended to the material objects aimed to cure or protect the body, physically, spiritually and mentally (psychologically).

The third component of the amulets under inspection here, is the elongated bead of *al-mīs* wood. The wood of this kind of tree appears in other amulets as well, but not in the shape of a bead Used to attract and deviate the attention of anyone who could potentially give the evil eye, these other amulets are actually an entire twig worn by attaching them to children's caps.[252] Obtained at *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*, this kind of wood has a protective power due to its connexion to the site but also through popular stories that tell how the trees were planted by the jinns to protect the shrine.[253] Although the beads are used differently from the twigs, the underlying power is the same. In combination with the alum and the blue bead, *al-mīs* beads rely on the intrinsic qualities of the wood. *Al-mīs* is a particular kind of tree that is found in the esplanade of *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*. Stories about how they ended in the esplanade connect the trees with Prophet Salomon, and due to their location, the trees posses the *baraka* of the holy site. Moreover, the efficacy of the wood is increased if it is cut on 27th Ramadan during *lailat al-qadr,* so it is quite probable that the beads

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251 Information about these rites come from personal communication with Aref Abu-Rabia during my fieldwork in the Summer of 2018.

252 M.A. Garcia Probert, "Twigs in the Tawfik Canaan Collection" in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context. Transmission, Efficacy and Collections,* Leiden: Brill, (In process of publication)

253 T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.62

come from twigs cut on that day. The wood of these trees is used by Muslims, but some Christians use it as well. They get it from the *al-mīs* trees that grow in Bir Qadisma (Mar Elias).[254]

This alum-blue bead-*al-mīs* kind of amulet articulates the cleansing power of the alum, the protective quality of the blue bead against evil eye, and the *baraka* of the wood from the trees of *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*. Each material adds layers of power to the amulet, which grants general protection and healing qualities at the same time. The arrangement of the materials point to the fact that they were meant to be hung or attached to the clothes. They are kept together by a wool string or can appear as the ending part of a necklace. Canaan registered that no. 417 was used against the envious eye (*'ayn al-ḥasūd*)—another way of calling the evil eye. The amulet was attached to the

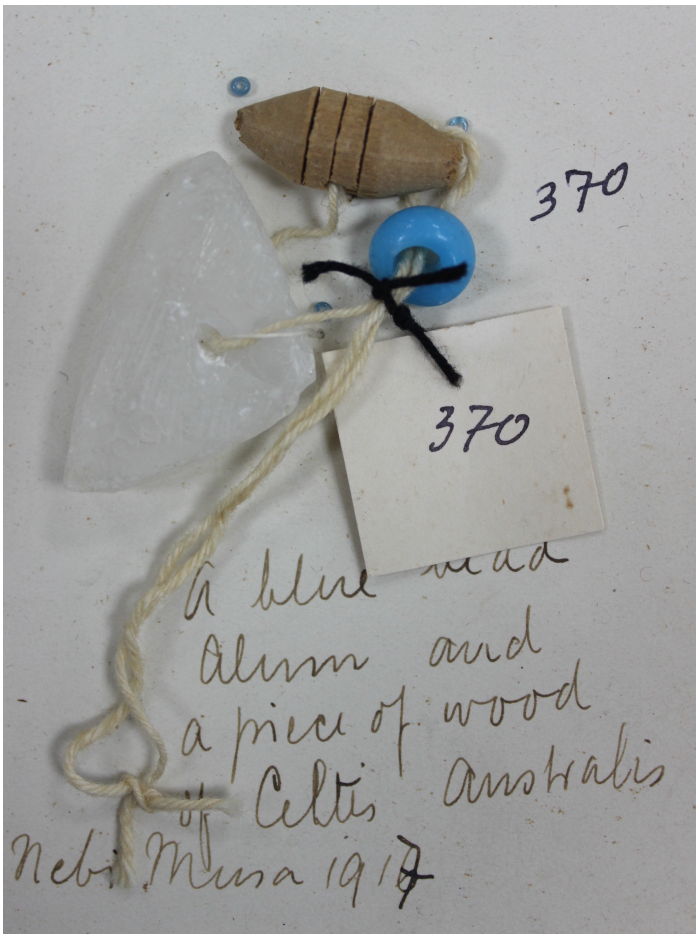


Figure 14. Bead/alum/*al-mīs* amulet. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets
Photo taken by the author

254 T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.62-63

clothes or the cap of a child. This kind of amulet seems to have been well-known, which can be concluded based on its widespread availability in Jerusalem and Nabi Musa.[255]

Amulets 1111, 1113, and 1114 are amulets similar to the two discussed previously but they were manufactured later. Canaan recorded that these amulets were of "new fabrication", and sold in Jerusalem since the 1920's.[256] The difference between these newer amulets and the older ones is the way the materials are set. While it seems that the first two amulets could have been set by anyone (by the practitioner or the users) by just obtaining the three different parts separately, the newer amulets seems to have been manufactured as such from the very beginning. The parts are connected with metal wire and also contain sequins of different colours. In contrast with the older items that were attached to the clothes, these amulets were meant to be hung, which we know based on the fact that a chain came together with the amulets. With a more striking design, they might no longer have been used only for their protective power, but also for their look. This hypothesis requires more research, especially in relation to the questions how and when amulets developed into fashion-items. The disjunctive on whether an amulet was used primarily for protection/ healing or for aesthetic reasons is not part of this thesis, however it is a good point to reflect on for future research.

The last case to explore is no. 1029. It is a wooden box with many different objects from the *maqām* of Nabi Yaqin. It includes colourful threads, two pieces of glass (similar to the *khalīlī* glass discussed in Chapter 4), a shell, a coin, a pinch of clay[257], two red beads, a thread with beads, and two amulets like those mentioned in the previous paragraph. According to Canaan's notes, all these amulets were tied to or put in contact with the shrine by a woman whose child was very sick. The objects had to remain in the shrine until the *walī* paid attention to the child and cured him. Obtained in 1923, there is no explicit mention on how Canaan got them, but I assume that it must have been directly from the mother of the child (most amulets used by children were obtained directly from their mothers). What is interesting to note here is that the mother in her desperation to search a cure for her sick child, turned to as many amulets as possible. This could have been in order to increase the chances that one might work if another failed, or intentionally to recur to different kinds of beneficial power.

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[255] No. 370 is mentioned to have been acquired in Nabi Musa in 1917.

[256] Canaan's cardboards and handwritten catalogue in German.

[257] The clay is found in a compact flat cookie-like shape inside a folded sheet of paper. Drawing similarities to how clay from other sites were used, this might have come from the shrine of Nebi Yaqin.



Figure 15. Bead/alum/*al-mīs* amulets of new fabrication, rags, glass beads, and soil from the tomb of Prophet Yaqin. Catalogued under no. 1029. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

Regarding the alum-blue bead-*al-mīs* amulet and its association with Prophet Yaqin might show two scenarios. One is that the user of this amulet (the mother) was not aware of the origin of the wooden bead and its connexion to *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*, a fact that led her to activate its power in the abode of another saintly figure, Prophet Yaqin. Since this type of amulet seems to have been well-known, it is then also probable that the wooden beads originated from other trees just for the purpose of selling them. Bearing this in mind, the amulet could be activated at any sanctuary. A second scenario is that, despite knowing about the origin of the wood of *al-mīs* from the *al-ḥaram al-sharīf*, the woman had no hesitation to link it to another holy site. This would certainly add another layer of power and make the amulet even more efficacious. Taking an amulet that contains parts from *al-ḥaram*, but using it in connection with a saint, shows the loyalties that people had towards a particular saint. While for one person the mixed materials of the amulet would suffice due to their intrinsic qualities and origin, for another these materials had to be linked to a saint

regardless the object in question. This example tackles our notions of hierarchies within religious practice and shows that in everyday practice everything is possible. Remedies were activated by means of the right combination of materials, through specific rituals, and by following the "magical/medical" prescription to the letter.[258] But all these were subjected to different authorities who might combine the materials differently, prescribe different intake procedures and activate the amulets through different rituals.

2.8 Conclusions

In the first half of the 20th century, when Canaan assembled his collection of amulets, two medical cultures coexisted in Palestine. These medical cultures were prevalent throughout greater Syria, and used same of slightly different terminology. On the one hand the traditional forms of healing and protection which were predominant in the rural areas among peasants and bedouins, on the other hand new forms of biomedical practice recently introduced by Western doctors/institutions. These two medical cultures conceptualised illness, healing and efficacy, in different ways. Their encounter however, did not produce a clash, rather, interesting ways of negotiation and adaptation. Although efforts were made to replace traditional forms of healing with modern ones, the local population continued to use traditional remedies into the 20th century. In some areas, like in the South, the process of abandoning amulets in favour of the biomedical approach started even only with the spread of public education with the Egyptian administration in Gaza. The synergy between modern medicine and traditional healing can be seen in the mechanisms of adaptation and the changes in both practices over time. On the one hand, amulets continued to function even after the introduction of biomedicine, however the pragmatic logic behind their use allowed for new forms of treatment to be incorporated. On the other hand modern doctors had to adjust to the centuries-old practices and negotiate treatments where their medicaments could be combined with amulets.

An important result of the encounter of these two forms of medicine was the "discovery" and documentation of the use of different materials in the manufacture of traditional remedies and the ways they were applied in cures. This anthropological interest in traditional medicine was recorded by many scholars: Taufiq Canaan, Gustaf Dalman, Henry Spoer, Grace Crowfoot and

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258 For the importance of following prescriptions correctly, see the case study of the bedouins in the Negev in A. Popper-Giveon; A. Abu-Rabia and J. Ventura, "From White Stone to Blue Bead: Materialised Beliefs and Sacred Beads Among the Bedouin in Israel" in *Material Religion*, 10.2 (2014)

Louise Baldensperger.[259] Had it not been for their work, un-inscribed amulets and those made of organic materials, would never become object of academic research.

Although the ethnographic /medical eye of these modern scholars of late the 19th century and early 20th century in general explained amulets as superstition and residual elements of a corrupted Biblical past, some provided insights describing amulets functioning within an internal logic. Contemporary studies on traditional medicine have used tools to analyse amulets focusing on how users evaluate their efficacy and continue using certain remedies or dispose them. Approaching them in this way, amulets reveal their complexity in the way they integrate different aspects of the cosmology of the users and reflect aspects of the society. For instance, the mixed-material multi-purpose amulets articulate the belief in the sanctity of persons, the landmarks and the intrinsic power of nature; and the inter-confessional amulets disclose that geographical location was more important than religious affiliation, as well as the fluid nature of agrarian religion. Features of the landscape, climate and geological formation, as well as the location of sanctuaries defined the cult around certain saints and the use of certain materials in amulets such as milk beads, and Musa stones.

The function of healing and protection lays at the base of the existence of amulets. The power to restore well-being is their raison-d'être. However, there were other powers that executed an influence on the amulets sometimes directly in the production process, sometimes at later stages in the life of the amulets. Such alternative or additional uses and functions that developed in parallel and subsequently in the 20th century when they become ethnographic data, collectibles, commodities in antique shops, and museographic objects will be the topic of the following chapters.

[259] Their work and relation to Canaan will be explored in the next chapter. References to their work can be seen in the bibliography.

Chapter 3. Amulets as ethnographic data and collectables

3.1 Outline

This chapter revolves around the development of ethnographic research and collecting in Palestine, and the rise in interest in studying and collecting objects of Palestine folklore. By exploring colonial practices of collecting in relation to the development of ethnographic research, this chapter discloses the formation of a cultural practice in which specific objects became valued and were considered worthy to be collected. Through Taufiq Canaan's collecting activity, the chapter analyses the mechanisms through which collectors, like him, formed their collections. It explores how physician-collectors engaged with the objects they gathered, and how this engagement shaped their relation with other collectors and with the local population (who used the objects). The value attached to amulets as ethnographic specimens and collectables is key to understand how objects contributed to shape social relations and cultural practices. To be collected and placed in a collection, however, did not replace other functions. Amulets kept circulating as protective and healing devices and as commodities, while simultaneously being collected as ethnographic evidence. The multiple and simultaneous functions of the amulets changed under influence of historical processes. The change in the practice of medicine, explored in the previous chapter, was one, but next to it changes in how they were commoditised and the networks where they circulated changed over time. Amulets never just underwent these changes passively, instead they were active participants shaping as they were being shape.

The chapter starts with a brief account of the role missions played in the development of ethnographic research in Palestine. It explores the revival of the Holy Land that led to the foundation of the missionary schools and archaeological institutes responsible for archaeological excavations. It then shows the impact these institutions had on the transformation of the Jerusalemite urban milieu, where Canaan developed as a physician and ethnographer. The chapter also explores the emergence of the physician collector as a result of the hygienisation projects that led to the foundation of hospitals in Palestine. Finally, the chapter focuses on Canaan's ethnographic research and collecting activity. It analyses the forms of acquisition of objects, the selection processes, the engagement with his interlocutors, and his relation with other collectors, patients, donors, shop keepers and antiquarians.

3.2 The missions

Studying and collecting ethnographic objects had been a common practice in all colonised regions of the world since the 19th century. The "discovered" lands were subjected to scrutiny by the colonial eye and collecting became an integral part of apprehending the colonised other. In Palestine, the study and understanding of the local population took place mainly through the institutions of the Christian missions, which settled down in the region motivated by the idea of being in the "Holy Land", where their members could study the modern-day customs and understand their connection with the Biblical past. Like missionary activities in other regions, the mission in Palestine also aimed to "lift" the local population to a higher standard of living.

Taufiq Canaan's ethnographic research and collecting activities can be framed within the missionary activities that began in the 19th century and continued during the British Mandate. Missionary societies had settled in Palestine long before the Tanzimat Reforms of 1830, but it was the economic opening that these reforms brought that allowed for the growth and opening of diverse institutions. Missions were many and their development followed different stages according to their own evangelical interests and the expansionist interest of each Western government that they were related to. Western governments in general sought to assert their influence in Palestine and turn it into a modern entity suitable for their political, economic and ideological endeavours.[260]

The idea that Palestine was a place in need of Europe's help was concretely embodied in the missions. Missionary societies included different kinds of members: religious missionaries, travellers, scholars, and businessmen. Despite their different motivations and purposes of migration, one attitude prevailed towards the indigenous population; that of pity and contempt due to the precariousness of the life of most Palestinians.[261] This attitude led them to set specific goals. Heleen Murre-van den Berg points out, that there were two common aims to all missions: converting the 'nominal' and non-Christians through public and private preaching, and enlightening and uplifting the population through education, social and medical care.[262]

Missionaries' attitudes towards the local population followed different stages. Those who settled in Palestine became acquainted with the local population of the towns and villages. Through their institutions they created islands of European "modernity" that according to Pappe, "reminded

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[260] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*

[261] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine,* p.32

[262] H. Murre-van den Berg, *New Faith in Ancient Lands. Western Missions in the Middle East in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, p. 13

foreigners of home but also accentuated the colonial reality they were creating of master and native".[263] The attitude of superiority that resulted from the first encounter with Palestine, was based on an imagined reality of the people rather than on a lively engagement with them. With time, this imagined reality changed as interactions took place. A first generation of foreigners was born in Palestine, and a first generation of Palestinians was enrolled in the missionary schools. Schools targeted first of all Christian Palestinians, who were the first ones to be included in missionary institutions and to be acquainted with the missions' culture. Later on missionary schools also included Muslims from elite families and from the urban bourgeoisie. As a result of these engagements, different generations of Palestinians became part of the missions and played an important role in expanding the missions' work amongst the local population.

3.3 The cultural and religious background of Taufiq Canaan

Born in Beit Jala in a Palestinian Lutheran family, Taufiq Canaan was brought up within a mixed environment of German Protestant and Palestinian values. Most of his life, he remained connected to the institutions founded by the Protestant mission. The Protestants had settled in Jerusalem relatively late compared to other Christian denominations. As soon as they had, however, their number grew rapidly, from circa fifty Protestants in 1850 to around a 1000 by the year 1900.[264] This increase was a consequence of the appointment of the German Evangelical Samuel Gobat as Protestant bishop of Jerusalem from 1846 to 1879, and the transformation of the mission under his leadership. Gobat opened the mission's scope by introducing proselytising activities that targeted Christians of other (non-Protestant) denominations, as well as to a lesser extent, Muslims.[265] Converting Muslims and Christians of other denominations was strictly forbidden according to Ottoman law, however, Gobat's annual reports show many cases of Eastern Christians from Nablus and Nazareth who were attracted and converted to Protestantism.[266]

Given the growing importance of the mission, Protestants became recognised as a *millet* by the Ottoman government in 1850. This recognition meant that as a religious community they had autonomy in spiritual affairs and, to some extent, in the administration of their own property. Once

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[263] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.40

[264] C. van der Leest, *Conversion and conflict in Palestine*, p. 31

[265] For a very detailed analysis of the development of the Protestant mission in Palestine. Cfr. C. van der Leest, *Conversion and conflict in Palestine,* p.111

[266] C. van der Leest, *Op.Cit*., p.125

the status of *millet* was granted, Gobat worked further to create a large number of German institutions which gave the German mission independence and autonomy from her Protestant sister, the British mission. Among the newly founded institutions was the Deaconesses of Kaiserswerth in Jerusalem, established in 1851, which included a pharmacy and a small hospital. This last facility would later be expanded and this is where Taufiq Canaan would get his first job.

Taufiq Canaan's way of thinking and behaviour were defined to a great extent by Lutheran moral and ethical principles, whose dissemination took place mainly through the German mission's schools. He started his education in the the Syrian Orphanage, established in 1860. It was set up for orphans of the Mount Lebanon civil war of that same year, but later developed into an extensive educational institute also for non-orphan children like Taufiq Canaan, and for for children of different denominations. Operating until 1940, the Orphanage was an important educational institution that had a strong influence on the population of Jerusalem through its graduates, who spread its philosophy of orderliness and discipline, and the German language throughout the region.[267] Schools like this, were "secular in so far as they did not provide Muslim education; but they were religious as Christian missionaries managed an important part."[268] The orphanage was part of a large network of private missionary schools that greatly impacted the life of Arab urban notables and members of the bourgeoisie through the European curriculum they offer,[269] which allowed them to access higher education in European universities.

Another academic institution that played a very important role in defining new forms of education was the Syrian Protestant College, later known as the American University of Beirut, where Taufiq Canaan studied medicine. The medical training through a new syllabus at this institution, modified the physicians' approach to illness introducing them to new forms of evaluating and treating patients. Moreover, by issuing degrees which become the only form of legitimation of the modern medical profession, it also altered the existing social structure. It caused modern doctors to compete for recognition and relegated some traditional healers.[270] It is important

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[267] Y. Ben-Arieh, 1979, p.451

[268] I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.47

[269] This urban nobility included the traditional a'ayān families, but also well-to-do urban families like Canaan's and big landlords (rural lords not longer viewed as semi-feudal sheikhs) that had acquired rural real-state but, in many cases, were living outside Palestine, in other Levantine cities. Cfr. I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p.45

[270] P. Bourmaud "*«Ya Doktor»: Devenir médecin et exercer son art en «Terre sainte», une expérience du pluralisme médical dans l'Empire ottoman finissant (1871-1918)."*

to highlight that, as a byproduct of Protestantism, the emphasis on textualism and scientific knowledge was one of the main features of this form of education. Canaan himself emerged from this new medical culture explaining his scientific distance from the amulets that had once been an integral part of the everyday religious practices, even of his own family.

Despite his modern education Canaan held the agrarian culture of the peasantry in high esteem. The archeological sites, the local people and their customs were after all a reminiscence of the Biblical past, and had become the object of many studies. For Canaan this was not the only reason, as this agrarian culture was also his family's own background. He studied, collected and distanced himself from peasants' beliefs and practices, but at the same time, as a Palestinian man he was close to and familiar with his study object. Canaan's interest in Palestine's folklore followed from his family background. He was very religious like his father Beshara Canaan, who had been appointed the first Lutheran pastor in the village of Beit Jala. Their religiosity had been shaped through their affiliation to the Lutheran church, but also through their own sense of belonging to Palestine and the fact that they shared elements of the agrarian culture of the peasants. In his memoirs, Canaan acknowledges being somehow connected to this agrarian culture, and its religiosity as being part of his family's beliefs and practices. A very interesting passage taken from his diaries about his mother and her aunts shows how the beliefs that he researched were actually part of his own personal background.

> "My mother Katherina… lost her mother at the age of about 4 years, Her father remarried soon. Directly after the marriage ceremony and when her step-mother was brought to the new home, Katherina was carried by her aunts to the roof of the house, in order to escape the evil results of the Kabach.[271] It was believed that the step-mother may cause the Kabach, which means evil effects resulting from the bad demons of hatred, jealousy, etc."[272]

The extent to which Canaan shared such beliefs and practices is very difficult to assess. In his writings he positions himself as a scientist taking distance from folk beliefs and practices. This distance and critical position seems to have developed in relation to Canaan's own life phases, such

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[271] Accordingly *qabbaḥ* is a form and an action of becoming bad, evil, abominable. Cfr. E. Lane, *English-Arabic Lexicon*, p.2537, http://ejtaal.net

[272] This passage has been taken from chapter 1 of the original text typed out by Fauzi Mantoura. The passage has been omitted in the Memoirs published in the Jerusalem Quarterly. Cfr. T. Canaan, *The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs*, Part I, p.14; T. Canaan, *Dr. Taufik Canaan, Family Story: His Memoirs*. (with Intro by Mitri Raheb) Dar al-Kalima: Bethlehem, 2021.

as his University studies and his research stays in Europe, but it also seems to have been determined by the engagements he established with interlocutors in the different circles in which he moved around, not always academic. His self-identification, as a medical doctor representative of a modern "and better" form of medicine, must have been strengthened while being around other modern doctors. He repeatedly criticised some of the customs of his study-objects (the peasants), especially practices that involved a lack of hygiene. Although it seems that Canaan lived according to Lutheran teachings and loyal to the foundations of modern medicine, he did not totally alienate from the agrarian culture of his ancestors because it was considered reminiscent of the Biblical past. This connection must have affected the way he made a distinction between Eastern and Western forms of healing, and the way he engaged with Palestine's folklore, his peasant patients and their amulets. How did he cope with both religious-cultural backgrounds? After all Canaan's family came from a religious culture that had been open to adopting elements, and that had been changing and transforming for a long time. I argue that Canaan must have identified more with his Lutheran background at times, and with his Palestinian background in others. This "ambivalence," or constant oscillation between elements that composed his identity must have occurred according to his positionality, and must have affected the way Canaan approached Palestine's folklore. This positionality was clearly marked by his own maturity as a person and scholar, the networks he created and the political situation of the country.

3.4 Revival and study of the Holy Land

The idea of Palestine as the Holy Land was an important reason for the emerging enthusiasm of foreign missionaries to immigrate. The sacrality of this geographical area had existed in the imagination of Christian communities since the first centuries. Glenn Bowman points out, "as the Biblical text has mutated and proliferated, so too, from the fifth century to the present day, have Christian visions of Jerusalem grown increasingly more diverse and divisive."[273] In the 19th century, the Holy Land acquired particular significance among Protestants due to the Evangelical revival or 'Awakening' that took place mainly in Europe and in the United States.[274] It led to the foundation of missionary societies that approached the Holy Land in search of spiritual inspiration from the sites connected to the life of Christ and also from those mentioned in the Old Testament; an inspiration drawn from what was interpreted as an unimpeded relationship between the

[273] G. Bowman, "Christian Ideology and the Image of the Holy Land. The Place of Jerusalem Pilgrimage in the Various Christianities", p.101

[274] C. van der Leest, *Op. Cit*., p.44

individual and Christ.[275] The interest in the Holy Land was reinforced by the apocalyptic belief that by the end of the millennium, Christ would come to start God's thousand-year reign.[276]

Images of the Holy Land, though, were shaped by the different experiences that travellers had there. Since the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, in 1798, tourists, archeologists, geographers, artists, specialists in Biblical studies, pilgrims and religious missionaries had authored written and visual representations of the Orient's archaeological and sacred sites, and, to a lesser extent, of its native inhabitants. These representations circulated in an environment where the possibilities of settling developed. From a land of curiosity into a land full of promises, open for investment, tourism and research, these different approaches had to do with the changing policies regarding investment and migration.

Before the security policies of the Tanzimat very few foreigners dared to travel in the region. It was only after the 1830's that Palestine started to receive an important influx of visitors. Among them were travellers who, encouraged by the new and vast options of travel guides, visited the Holy Land for pilgrimage and leisure. The travel guides were based on research of scholars, who ventured into the region to study specific aspects of the geography such as the natural resources and archaeological sites. Geographers produced the first maps to be included in the guidebooks, while well-known historians and archaeologists were in charge of writing the contents. These guidebooks included very general remarks about the local inhabitants.[277]

Missionaries' research institutes played an important role in conceptualising the Holy Land, and in propagating ideas about it through their publications. Prominent were the institutes that organised archaeological excavations. Although they had been active for decades, they only became officially recognised in 1917 when the Mandate government for the first time granted permission to foreigners to excavate.[278] These institutes were first aimed at involving a wide network of European scholars, but later incorporated native scholars who produced ethnographic research of different kinds.

Among the institutions where Taufiq Canaan developed his ideas and approach to the study of Palestine's folklore were the American School of Oriental Research, which opened its first

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[275] G. Bowman, *Op. Cit.* p. 33

[276] C. van der Leest, *Op. Cit.*, p.45

[277] E. Bosworth, The Land of Palestine in the late Ottoman period as mirrored in Western guidebooks, British Society for Middle East Studies. Bulletin 13.1 (1986): 36-44

[278] U. Hübner and B. Merschen, *Palaestine exploranda*, p. 256

overseas institute in Jerusalem in 1900, and The Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes founded in 1902 with Gustaf Dalman (9 June 1855 - 19 Augustus 1941) as its first director. The approach of the ethnographic research developed in these institutes followed the lines of investigation carried out in Europe, which was determined by the political agendas of each one of the colonial projects of the sponsoring states. With the establishment of the British Mandate, another important institution that impacted not only Canaan, but probably many other scholars working in Palestine, was the Palestine Oriental Society, whose journal became the main outlet of Canaan's published work.

3.4.1 Modes of ethnographic engagement

The study of the Holy Land was completely embedded in Orientalist ideas, but throughout the years it went through different phases as it became the matter of interest of different disciplines. Khaled Furani and Dan Rabinowitz have explored this development and distinguish two modes of ethnographic engagement that appeared chronologically in pre-1948 research on Palestine.

The first mode, authored by the first travellers and explorers in the Levant, produced geographical, historical and archaeological descriptions of the land and its people considered as "residual biblical relics who can easily be incorporated into a Christian European patrimony".[279] Biblical studies was the main theoretical framework of this first generation. The Bible, set at the core, was the ratio to measure all kinds of contemporary cultural phenomena such as language, village life, natural history, geography and folktales. Biblical research though theology-oriented, had also an anthropological variant as practiced by Western scholars. Some of these scholars such as P. Baldensperger,[280] C.R. Conder,[281] E.H. Palmer,[282] C. Ritter,[283] among others, traveled the countryside and noted down all their observations. Others were long-time residents in Syria and Palestine, mostly missionaries or consular agents who learned Arabic and interacted with the local

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[279] K. Furani and D. Rabinowitz, "The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine", p.476

[280] Phillipe Jean Baldensperger (d. 1948).

[281] Claude Reignier Conder (29 Dec, 1848 - 16 Feb, 1910) part of the Palestine Exploration Fund. Cfr. C. Conder, Tent Work in Palestine, Vol I & II, 1879.

[282] Edward Henry Palmer (7 August 1840 - 10 August 1882)

[283] Carl Ritter (7 August 1779 - 28 sept 1859). Cfr. C. Ritter, The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula, 1886.

population. This second group of scholars who included Rev. J.E. Hanauer[284], Rev. G. Robinson Lees[285], Henry and Adela Spoer[286] were pioneers in recording first-hand information about everyday life in Palestine, gathering an important amount of material about everyday religion.

The second mode of ethnographic engagement produced ethnographies that were based on a secularised and scientific approach that considered Palestinians as Oriental subjects.[287] Biblical motives were replaced by factual information and data that had to be systematically collected from fieldwork observation. Among scholars who worked in this way were G. Dalman, E. Finn[288], J.E. Hanauer and P. Baldensperger[289] in later works, and H. Granqvist.[290] The secularised and scientific approach resulted in the gathering of data about the geography and the people who inhabited the land. The people's customs and traditions were recorded with their own particularities showing for the first time the diversity and lively nature of Palestinian culture. This approach provided enough material for Palestinian scholars to later shape the beginnings of a Palestinian national identity, as a way to counteract the British presence and the Zionist emerging nation state.

From this second mode of ethnographic research, a first generation of Palestinian scholars emerged with a new approach to the study of Palestine's landscape, population and customs. According to Salim Tamari they were the founders of a nativist ethnography, which "attempted to establish sources of legitimation for Palestinian cultural patrimony (and implicitly for a Palestinian national identity..)"[291]. Taufiq Canaan and his colleagues Khalil Totah (1887-1955), Omar al-Saleh al-Barghouti (1894-1965), Stephan Hanna Stephan (1894-1949), and Elias Nasrallah Haddad

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284 J.E. Hanauer, *Folk-Lore of the Holy Land: Moslem, Christian and Jewish*, London: Duckworth & Co., 1907

285 G. Robinson Lees, *Village Life in Palestine. A Description of the Religion, Home Life, Manners, Customs, Characteristics and Superstitions of the Peasants of the Holy Land, with Reference to the Bible*. N.Y., Bombay and Calcuta: Longmans Green & Co., 1911

286 H. H. Spoer and Adela (Goodrich-Freer) Spoer. "Sickness and Death among the Arabs of Palestine." *Folklore* 38 (1927), 115-42; H.H. Spoer, "Arabic Magic Medicinal Bowls." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 55.3 (1935): 237-256

287 K. Furani and D. Rabinowitz, *Ibidem*.

288 E. Finn, *Palestinian Peasantry: Notes on Their Clans, Warfare, Religion and Laws*. London: Marshall Brothers, 1923.

289 P.J. Baldenspergen, *The Immovable East: Studies of the People and Customs of Palestine*, ed. Frederic Less, Boston: Small, Maynard and Co., 1913

290 H. Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*. Helsingfors, Finland, 1931

291 S. Tamari, *Mountain Against the Sea*, p.95

(1932- 1959)[292], were the representatives of this nativism. Confronting previous ethnographies that attempted to show the "Living Bible" in the norms and material culture of the peasantry,[293] their work was rather based on empirical data collected during fieldwork aimed to offer a more diversified and "true" image. Being native speakers of Palestinian Arabic was key to access the oral culture of the rural population and record verbatim sayings, songs and tales that circulated in the everyday life of Palestinians.

The work of these Palestinian scholars was driven by scientific curiosity but also by a concern for the imminent undermining of the native culture in Palestine (their own culture).[294] Taufiq Canaan and his circle witnessed and expressed a major concern about the eventual erasure of the autochthonous culture of Palestine and particularly that of the peasant society, which had been functioning as its perfect repository. Components of the peasants' culture were then consciously recorded and studied as remnants of a "vibrant, cumulative assemblage of modern and ancient civilisations that included Israelites, Egyptians, Syrio-Aramaics and, not least, Arabs"; it was a form of living that had so far developed and transformed organically over a period of centuries, but that had reached a point where it became under threat.[295] Samples of material culture were collected as representatives of this ancient, land-rooted but nevertheless dynamic culture. This view was politically motivated as it challenged the colonial idea of an ephemeral Arab culture that could easily be displaced and replaced.[296]

Paradoxically however, by emphasising the idea of the demise of a centuries-long culture, Canaan and his circle neglected the fact that this Palestinian culture was able to adapt to new circumstances (as it has always done). Resulting from the emphasis on the power and effects of colonisation and modernisation practices, these nostalgic attitudes towards the disappearing and decaying Palestinian culture overlooked that the autochthonous culture never lost its agency. In fact, very interesting engagements sprang from the way local people from different geographic, social and cultural backgrounds related with the colonising and modernising forces. Regional variations of

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[292] Elias N. Haddad, *Al-lugha al-arabiyya al-ammiyya fi filastin*, Jerusalem: Syrian Orphanage Press., 1946; He was co-author with Henry Spoer of the *Manual of Palestinean Arabic for Self Instruction*, published in Jerusalem in 1909.

[293] S. Tamari, "Lepers, Lunatics and Saints", p.35

[294] S. Tamari, *Ibidem.*

[295] K. Furani and D. Rabinowitz, "The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine", p. 479; T. Canaan, "Unwritten Laws Affecting the Arab Women of Palestine", p. 34.

[296] K. Furani and D. Rabinowitz, *Ibidem.*

local practices and the way they changed in response to urban intrusions and the political development can be seen throughout the Mandate period and even after the Nakba. A contemporary case of saint revival and veneration in a West Bank village, for instance, shows how the engagements with the landscape, its natural landmarks and sanctuaries, still play a role in forms of devotion, social relations, and political activism.[297]

3.4.2 Palestinian Orientalism

How did the idea of the demise of the Palestinian culture permeate the works of nativist scholars? The work of U. Makdisi, *Ottoman Orientalism*[298], is useful here to answer this question. According to him, Ottoman orientalism meant "a complex of Ottoman attitudes produced by a nineteenth-century age of Ottoman reform that implicitly and explicitly acknowledged the West to be home of progress and the East to be a present theatre of backwardness."[299] Contrary to E. Said's idea of Orientalism as being created by, and having functioned only within the Western imagination, Makdisi establishes it as a prevalent and defining aspect of the Ottoman modernity. It used the language of its Western counterparts, but had its own particularities. The Ottoman state at its centre (in Anatolia) identified itself with being oriental, Islamic, eastern, and modern, but in doing so, it differentiated itself from its peripheries. In this way the Ottoman state in its reforming enterprise (the Tanzimat) created a notion of "pre-modernism" that was applied to all the provinces in general and the Arab lands in particular. These provinces became subjected to a form of representation which in part resembled the representation that European colonial administrators had of their overseas subjects in the colonies, as backwards and different.

It is interesting to see that, while a particular form of orientalist representation was produced at the centre of the Ottoman empire, another form appeared in the Levantine provinces with particular reference to the so-called Holy Land. The agglutinated elements of an Ottoman orientalism found their way, on the one hand, through Ottoman governmental schools where some Palestinians were trained, and on the other hand, through the Biblical discourse endorsed by missionary institutions. This unique blend developed insofar as Ottoman and missionary institutions reached and trained Palestinian professionals, who interpreted and *re-produced* a very particular

[297] This is the case of the saint Abu Laymun of Bil'in, who has been revived as an active part of the village resistance against the Israeli occupation. Cfr. M.A. Garcia Probert "The mobility of saints and sanctuaries in historical, folkloric and political narratives. The case of Abu Laymun of Bil'in", paper presented at MESA Annual Conference 2018.

[298] U. Makdisi, "*Ottoman Orientalism",* American Historical Review 107:3 (Jun., 2002) 768-796

[299] U. Makdisi, *Ibid*., p. 769

form of orientalism. Palestinians, in this sense, did not passively assume notions of time, history, progress, the other, etc., they were also actively shaping them. They simultaneously were subjects and objects, not only of one kind of orientalism, but to many different variations.

Should we consider this blend of orientalisms a Palestinian orientalism? If the formation of an Ottoman orientalism lay on a dialectic relation with Western culture, why not say that the Ottoman periphery with its many cultural centres established as well the same kind of relation with the Ottoman centre and the West. Considering the theory of "nesting orientalism",[300] which recognises a sort of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which it is based, a Palestinian orientalism would address this dichotomy in its own words. On the one hand, "westernised" urban Palestinians, who had been trained by/in contact to missionary societies, acknowledged themselves as heirs of the autochthonous culture, which they studied in ethnographic terms and collected. On the other hand, these "westernised" individuals created a distance between and differentiated themselves from the rural world of the peasants and bedouins who in their eyes represented the "oriental" subjects, living in a premodenised state.

E. Said has emphasised that the political origin of orientalism should be kept in mind at all times.[301] To what extent were the political interests, claims, projects, ambitions and rhetoric of Western orientalism reproduced by Palestinians regarding the world of peasants and bedouins? Did Palestinian scholars create and sustain power relations by studying and collecting the rural world? Indeed, knowing the people, investigating their behaviour, manners and customs,[302] had a political aim, which was reproduced to a certain extent by members of the Palestinian elites. They were embedded in the mechanisms of colonisation. An analysis of their role in shaping this sort of orientalist ideas about the rural world must be done by considering their development in a changing socio political context. Taufiq Canaan's ethnographic work and collecting activity show this development.

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[300] M. Bakic-Hayden, "Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia," *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 918; U. Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism", p.772

[301] E. Said, "Orientalism Reconsidered", *Cultural Critique* 1 (1985):89-107

[302] E. W. Lane, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*. (1860). With a new introduction by John Manchip White. New York: Dover, 1973. The manners and customs of modern Egyptians has been taken here, as it stands as one of the most well-known and important work of this generation of travellers and explorers, in which the autochthonous culture of Egypt is studied with the aim to understand the behaviour of modern Egyptians by understanding their cultural past. The link to Lane's work aims to address the many authors who were involved in creating this sort of genre, that revolved around the manners and customs of the colonised peoples.

3.5 Taufiq Canaan, the ethnographer

The collecting activity of Taufiq Canaan is an integral part of the research on Palestine's folklore that he carried out in the first half of the 20th century. The result of his research was the publication of monographs and academic articles about different aspects of the everyday life of the inhabitants of rural Palestine. Among his publications there are a few about the political situation of Palestine, a topic further explored in Chapter 5. Canaan's research was driven by personal interests, scientific curiosity but also ideological motivations. His study of the people of Palestine was inspired by his father, who organised family trips to the countryside. Canaan, like his father, was particularly engaged with the country, since it was the land of the Bible, and as natives they saw themselves as heirs of its Biblical past. In his retrospective article *Das Elternhaus* published in 1961, Canaan mentioned:

> "Mein Vater hatte, um uns mit Land und Leuten bekannt zu machen, uns wiederholt auf kurze und lange Touren ins Land mitgenommen. Diese fortlaufende Verbindung mit der Bevölkerung hat in uns und besonders in mir frühzeitig die Liebe zur Heimat erweckt und uns bis heute eine unverbrüchliche Boden-Verbundenheit erhalten."[303]

Many years after his trips into the countryside, Canaan's interests were revived when he started working as a physician. In his memoirs Canaan mentioned that working in the hospital allowed him to connect closely with his patients and learn a lot about the folklore of the country which eventually led him to enquire about and collect amulets.[304] Canaan was one of the Palestinian pioneers who carried out research on village culture in general, and traditional forms of protection and healing in particular. His work, as mentioned before, was part of a bigger movement of missionary exploration and research that had different phases in the conceptualisation of the Palestinian land and people. By exploring his publications chronologically, it is possible to track the development and maturation of his ideas.

An overall view of his writings shows that his first publications articulated the ideas of the Biblical Orientalism of his time and his own understanding and approach (as a native scholar).

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[303] "Father took us on short and long excursions all over the country to learn more about the country and people. This ongoing contact with the people instilled in all of us, and especially in me at an early stage, the love for homeland, and maintained in all of us an unshakable loyalty to our country." This English translation is taken from W. Abdullah, "Tawfik Canaan: A Biography" in *Ya kafi, Ya shafi, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* Palestine: Birzeit University Publications, 1998, edited by K. Nashef; The original in German is published in T. Canaan, "Das Elternhaus", 1961, p.18

[304] T. Canaan. "The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs, Part 1." p. 20

Taking distance from the peasants, he differentiated himself and his cultural milieu from theirs, while simultaneously acknowledged the complexity of the cosmology that framed the peasants' beliefs and customs; a cosmology that had accumulated elements from many historical periods, and that was shared by his own ancestors. Through his ethnographic work, Canaan explored aspects of Palestine's folklore that were never addressed before such as the beliefs in demons, evil spirits, and the many ways amulets could be used to target them. In later writings Canaan highlighted the role the peasantry had played in constructing this rural culture. Letting his ethnographic subjects talk, Canaan gave agency to the *fallāhīn* and bedouin by exploring their own dialects and the way they named places,[305] their dwellings, the way they built, their rituals related to the divine, their fears and the way they manufactured amulets. In sum, Canaan's works disclose an oscillation between being an outsider who scientifically studied Palestine's folklore, and an insider who identified and shared elements of the same culture.

Canaan's ideas about Palestine's folklore developed throughout his life. Particular events were important in shaping his ideas about the peasantry, such as his years in University, his engagement with peasant patients through which he learned a lot about their forms of healing, and his engagement with scholars doing research on Palestine's folklore and archaeology. An episode of Canaan's life that seems to have affected his ideas on Palestinian folklore in relation to the Bible, was his involvement in the Leprosarium of Talbiya. Canaan assumed the directorship of this institution in 1919 after the decease of his colleague and friend Dr. Einsler, who had been in charge of it. The Leprosarium was the only one of its kind in all the Levant. From the many elements that featured peasants' life, leprosy had been considered the epitome of the reminiscence of Biblical times. Canaan's research on leprosy led him to treat the disease and eventually find a cure.[306] His medical work on this disease, and the fact that such a rooted disease could be finally treated, I argue, challenged the perception of the immobility of the Biblical past that engrained the life of contemporary inhabitants.

3.6. Collecting, collectors, collections

Collecting practices developed hand in hand with ethnographic research. It became a widespread colonial practice as it evolved as part of the sponsored activities of imperial states, whose political

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[305] T. Canaan. *Studies in the Topography and Folklore of Petra*. Jerusalem: Beyt-UI-Makdess Press, 1930.

[306] K. Nashef, "Tawfīq Kan'ān: taqwīm jadīd", *Majala al-dirāsāt al-fîlasṭīnīya,* 50 (2002): p. 84

agendas targeted the exploration and acquaintance of the colonised lands and their subjects. Collecting also sprang out from the curiosity of European travellers, missionaries, and later, the local population, who assimilated and re-produced some of the colonial practices.

Curiosity was neither imported by Europe nor new, it had been there for centuries as one of the motivations for forming collections. However, the practice of collecting has developed through time as observed by J. Alsop.[307] For a long time collecting had been an exclusive enterprise of sultans, kings, and rich merchants, who stood mostly as patrons of the arts. They were the only ones financially capable of acquiring unique and rare objects and tailor-made works of art. Access to these kinds of collectable goods required belonging to a particular social and political class. In the late 18th century, however, collecting became popularised, thus gathering objects for the sake of collecting turned into a cultural practice of the bourgeoisie. It is precisely this phase of collecting, which included many missionaries, travellers, anthropologists, and physicians that went to Palestine, who developed very interesting collections according to their background and profession.

Such a popularisation process of collecting implied a change of paradigm in which the practical function or utility of the object was replaced by pure aesthetic pleasure. Joseph Alsop has differentiated between the objects gathered within the framework of the patronage of the arts, and those collected within what he properly calls "collecting". The main difference between both is that for the first form, which abounded in history, the patron based his/her choice on an art-for-use-plus-beauty framework. An example of a collection formed under the patronage of arts is that nowadays on display at the Topkapi Museum. The Ottoman sultans started acquiring valuable objects in the 15th century. Much of what they acquired was intended to be used: furniture, ceramics, jewellery, among others. Many gifts from other parts of the world show very well that the Topkapi treasures were not actually intended to be one single museum collection but became part of the sultan's belongings.[308] The arrangement of the treasures into collections must be seen as a phenomenon that took place later in time, as a historical retrospective of all the acquisitions.

By contrast, in the second form of collecting proposed by Alsop, the collectors' way of thinking corresponds to an art/object-as-an-end-in-itself.[309] This form of collecting places the

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[307] Collecting as a form of gathering objects of one same kind is a human activity that goes back to the first Homo Sapiens. The motivations for gathering and the value of objects have changed through time and place. Cfr. J.A. Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions: The History of Art Collecting and Its Linked Phenomena Wherever These Have Appeared.* New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

[308] F. Çagman, The Topkapi Collection, *Aramco World,* 38.2 (1987). http://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/198702/the.topkapi.collection.htm

[309] J. Alsop, *The Rare Art Traditions*, p.89

object's value beyond its original use. It implies deprivation of the object's original use and function by isolating it and inserting it in new categories. Created by the collector, these categories define the object's function. This form of collecting concerns us in investigating colonial collecting practices of ethnographic material in general, and the T.C.C.P.A. in particular.

Collecting an ethnographic object-as-an-end-in-itself, implies its removal from its original context of production and consumption for the sake of studying it scientifically. In contrast to other forms of collecting, the function of the scientific object, as Fabian points out, is "not as a souvenir, nor as a token of experience, or as a curio arousing curiosity, but as an item placed in systems of classifications and taxonomic description."[310] Since ethnographic collecting appeared as a political practice since the 18th century, "it was instrumental in gaining intelligence about territories and populations which were targeted by imperial rule: objects identified tribes and cultural units which eventually served to establish colonial boundaries and administrative subdivisions."[311]

Ethnographic collecting was based on theoretical premises and methodological procedures that emerged from the paradigm of a positivist natural history.[312] It served to classify people and to demarcate the civilised from the savage. The categories created to classify the ethnographic material responded to the particular approach that anthropologists had in every region of the world. In other words, the way in which each colony was imagined and represented, defined much of the quantity and quality of collected material. For Palestine, the notion of "Holy Land" and —later on, the folklorisation of the peasantry became central in shaping the guidelines of collectable objects.

3.6.1 Collecting ethnographic evidence in Palestine

Ethnographic research had a close connection with archaeology. Archaeologists had been in the region since the early 19th century aiming to rediscover places of the Biblical past. By unearthing ancient sites it was possible to trace Western European cultural and religious origins. Thus collecting material artefacts from such sites had to do with the interest of legitimating the Christian missionary activities and presence in the region. As the years passed, interests in archaeological sites spread to the Jewish population, who in general terms, excavated archaeological sites from

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[310] J. Fabian, "On Recognizing Things: The 'Ethnic Artefact' and the 'Ethnographic Object'", *L'Homme, Revue francaise d'anthropologie*, p.51

[311] J. Fabian, *Ibid.*, p.48

[312] J. Fabian, "Colecionando pensamentos: sobre os atos de colecionar", p. 61

Biblical times to legitimate their presence there. As for the Palestinians, their way to legitimate their presence was through the study of the people, their manners and customs.

The first ethnographic collecting enterprise of material artefacts used in the everyday life of Palestinian peasants was carried out by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF). Founded in 1865 the PEF is the oldest organisation created specifically for the study of the Levant. It was created "to promote research into archaeology and history, manners, customs and culture, topography, geology and natural sciences of Biblical Palestine and the Levant."[313] Their research revolved around the indigenous inhabitants of Palestine and was complemented by the collection of artefacts used in everyday life. Among the PEF collections, is the ethnographic material gathered by R.A.S. Macalister and Flinders Petrie during the late 19th and early 20th century. Their collection includes everyday-life artefacts that, according to them, depicted the "manners and customs" of the local people.[314] The artefacts in question pertain mostly to the category of attire, which includes clothes and accessories, and were bought in the market of Damascus. Artefacts other than these, such as house wares or tools to make products (baskets, looms, grinders, etc. that belong to the category of technology) were excluded, probably because they belonged to a more intimate sphere that the collectors were not interested in or could not access. Attire was the easiest to access as it was worn in public and accessories used were sold in markets which were open to foreigners.

The PEF and other institutions like the German Institute of Archaeology, played an important role in the development of collecting practices among the local population that included not only Palestinians but also, as time passed, born-in-Palestine Europeans. The impact of institutionalised collecting activities can be seen in how scholars and members of the bourgeoisie became interested in forming collections of diverse kinds of objects. As a result of this is that merchants had to adapt their trade to the objects that were now in demand. Some of these merchants became involved in the business of antiques and developed an interests in collecting for themselves. It is in this particular context that new professions appeared such as the *antikjī* (antiquarian) and the *simsār* (broker) who specialised in the trade of collectables.[315] (discussed more in depth in chapter 4, on the commoditisation of amulets).

Interesting engagements took place between western and Palestinian collectors and the local suppliers. The local population was very active and played a crucial role in the circulation of

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313 https://www.pef.org.uk/history/

314 Main webpage of the PEF. cfr., https://www.pef.org.uk

315 M. Voilat, *Antique Dealing and Creative Reuse in Cairo and Damascus 1850-1890*, Leiden: Brill, 2021

collectables even before the promulgation of Ottoman state policies towards antiquities, their trade and collection.[316] Benjamin Anderson has described their role as "local interpreters." For them, these objects were part of their everyday experience. So, the value attributed to the objects came not from the oldness and the way they represented an ancestry, but from the oldness in connexion with familiarity and usefulness.[317] An example of this are the remains of ruined buildings that formed part of the Palestinian landscape. Before becoming archeological sites, people living nearby would get building materials from these spaces full of stones (and other material debris). It was only with the arrival of archaeologists and collectors that a new value was given to ruined buildings. The understanding of an antiquity for these "local interpreters" varied according to the way they related to archaeologists, local authorities and collectors. Many of these local interpreters played a role in helping foreign collectors granting access to objects that were in demand.[318]

3.6.2 The figure of the physician-collector

Besides archaeological institutes, hospitals were institutions that also played an important role in studying the "other". Medical doctors working there were able to engage with the local population through their work. Their research on illnesses in order to develop proper treatments led them to become interested in what people had traditionally been doing to cure disease. This interest materialised in many research papers on folk medicine and in collecting samples of different remedies. These physician-collectors were in fact authors of unique collections of objects used to cure diseases. Taufiq Canaan, one of them, informed us of other physicians who worked on similar collecting projects and with whom he had close contact such as Dr. Kleibo, Dr. Henry Wellcome and Lydia Einsler.

Physicians living and working in Palestine had been arriving to Palestine since the early 19th century and played a very important role in the development of a sanitary infrastructure particularly in the urban centres. In later years this group of professionals also started to include Palestinians. As part of the missions and working for their respective institutions, physicians were in close contact with people in towns. In the daily encounters with their patients, they became familiar with the main illnesses of the country, and the healing practices that people used to counteract them, including the amulets. For some of them, the logic behind traditional healing and

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316 B. Anderson, "An alternative discourse: Local interpreters of antiquities in the Ottoman Empire", p.451

317 B. Anderson, *Op. Cit*, p.452

318 Cfr. M. Volait, *Ibidem.*

protection corresponded to biomedicine's therapeutics and prophylaxis. In their view, traditional remedies and their material expressions could be studied and collected since they fitted in their scientific categories. Another motivation for studying autochthonous forms of medicine was the fact that these were residual from Biblical time, and were starting to disappear as biomedicine and western forms of medicine were making their way.

The figure of the physician-collector developed because of the importance given to medical practice. Their work was supported by the respective consulates and aimed to diminish the threat diseases posed to workers of the consulates, members of the religious missionary groups, and businessmen who had invested in the land and had decided to settle there permanently. Hospitals and clinics were founded to deal with the most common diseases and bring to an end the most dangerous ones such as malaria and tuberculosis. British and German institutions were particularly active and served as an alternative to the health services provided to Palestinians by the Ottoman state, which in the eyes of the missionaries was very limited.

K. Asali in his study of medical facilities, mentions that foreign travellers who visited Jerusalem in the 1840's and 1850's registered in their travelogues the absence of local doctors in the city. This situation resulted from the vanishment of *al-bīmāristān al-ṣalāḥī* in the Muristan neighbourhood of the Old City, and the decay of another few instances in Jerusalem that used to treat patients, such as the hospices for Sufis and poor people: *al-ribāṭ al-manṣūri* (*mustashfā al-'umiyān* or Blind hospital), *ribāṭ 'alā' al-dīn al-baṣīr*, and the Helena Hospital (named after Byzantine Emperor Constantine's mother, who reputedly built this place). In these institutions doctors recurred to practices, reminiscence of the Arab-islamic medical tradition.[319] Given the lack of medical facilities, people of Jerusalem had to rely on foreign doctors, particularly from Lebanon, and made use of the services provided by *al-ḥallāqīn* (barbers) and *al-'aṭṭārīn* (perfumiers), whose role in providing remedies including amulets is described in Chapter 4.

Next to the foreign medical facilities that were established in Jerusalem in the 19th century by the missions, a limited number were owned by Jerusalemite doctors. Ibrahim Kleibo's polyclinic in the Old City was opened in 1911, but forced to close due the outbreak of the First World War. Canaan mentions having been involved in it, and having been able to work in a Muslim environment. This clinic had a very good location, which allowed him to have many patients. Canaan's remarks on his work there is very interesting since it discloses how he felt towards Muslim Jerusalemites of the Old City, as well as the perception that Muslim patients had of him. He

[319] K. Asali, *Muqaddima fi tārīkh al-ṭibb fi al-quds*, p. 214

says: “This polyclinic made me a very good name among the Mohammedans of the city and the villages around Jerusalem”[320] The explicit quote made me reflect on how Canaan’s work was perceived among the population of the Old City. Why was it so important for him to have a good reputation among the Muslims of the Old City? Was his biomedical approach, or his formation as a “modern” physician questioned at the beginning? Was this mistrust felt due to the fact that he was a Christian/missionary trained doctor? Canaan must have become trustworthy due to his sensitive and respectful attitude towards local customs, but also because he was after all a good doctor.

Although medical facilities improved the health of many Palestinians and foreigners living in Palestine, they remained limited to towns, and far out of reach of many peasants and semi-nomads. It was only after the First World War that medical services began to reach rural areas. By the end of the War and the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine, the improvement of health services became a priority and the state health system expanded considerably. In 1918 the Mandate government commenced the registration of cases of infectious diseases as part of the first census of 1922. New public health institutions targeted endemic epidemic diseases amongst which leprosy, malaria, tuberculosis, gastrointestinal diseases, and trachoma, were the most prominent.[321] These diseases had been the main cause of high infant mortality rates and general low life expectancy.[322] Besides the increase of public health facilities in Jerusalem and other major cities such as Nablus, Jaffa and Haifa, state-funded programs also benefited smaller towns. Stations were opened at times of epidemic crises to control contagious diseases in Nazareth, Safad, Tiberias, Jenin, Beisan, Tulkarem, Ramallah, and Hebron, among others. Mobile hospitals on camels were set up for emergency cases such as those in the Beer al-Saba‘ district.[323] However, despite the impressive improvements of health and sanitation, the countryside still remained largely deprived of basic healthcare facilities.

Sanitation during the British Mandate, was accompanied by a complete hygienisation program that included the construction of sewage and drainage systems, the draining of swamps,

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[320] This is extracted from Taufiq Canaan’s memoirs written in English. The term Muhammedan is used in the original unpublished text. In the published version Muslim has replaced Muhammedan. Cfr. T. Canaan, “The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs, Part 1”, p.24

[321] E. Masterman, “Hygiene and Disease in Palestine in Modern and in Biblical Times”, pp. 61-71

[322] S. Sufian, *Healing the Land and the Nation*, p.8

[323] A. Abu-Rabia, “Bedouin Health Services in Mandated Palestine”, p.422; Map of Public Health Districts of Palestine. From Palestine Department of Health annual report for 1933, Ein Kerem Medical Libray. Cfr. S. Sufian, Ibid., p. 10.

and the introduction of an hygienic education.[324] Sanitation and hygienisation were part of the mechanisms of colonisation, and were driven by practical and ideological concerns. Disease-eradication measures legitimised the presence of foreign doctors. Healthcare projects targeted the health of the natives with the aim to maintain a stable production of exports, and to secure the health of the English officials and soldiers. As Sandra Sufian points out "this attitude was consistent with a colonial policy for which health measures were not only parceled out selectively but were robed ideologically, geared more toward protecting imperial armies and settlers than indigenous populations."[325] As a result, no Arab health system was set up at all, leaving the native population dependent on foreign institutions.

The creation of health services helped to control common diseases and prolong life expectancy, which led to a demographic boom. Throughout the Mandate period and according to the two censuses carried out in 1922 and 1931 it is possible to see how the population grew. It can be seen that it was not only the result of babies surviving, but also in the case of the Jewish population due to immigration. The Jewish population, experienced the largest increase. According to Maxime Rodinson their numbers went from around 61,000 in 1920 to 608,000 by 1946, an increase of more than 900%. Muslim and Christian Palestinian population also experienced an increase mainly due to good healthcare services; their number went from 542,000 in 1920 to 1,237,000 by 1946. This demographic explosion was most visible in urban areas where inhabitants experienced a precarious situation with new diseases resulting from extreme poverty due to bad conditions of housing, overcrowding, malnutrition, etc. Also in rural areas, the lack of hygiene and poor sanitary infrastructure challenged the condition of the local population. Canaan observed that the precarious living and housing conditions among the rural population was a defining factor for poor health. He described that villages were devoid of any kind of state-funded infrastructure and services. Even when efforts of drying big swamp-areas had been made in some areas, especially near the Mediterranean coast and in the Galilee, villages in other areas still had wells and pools where mosquitoes were a big problem.

Within this framework of a discriminatory public health system, initiatives to reach out to rural communities were very limited. The itinerant work that Canaan carried out in the countryside from 1910 to 1919 exemplifies this. It was not common among the few doctors of the towns to offer medical services in the countryside. In fact, the peasants whom Canaan treated were among the very

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[324] A. Abu-Rabia, *Ibid*., p.421

[325] S. Sufian, *Ibid*., p.9

few that benefited from services sporadically offered by individuals committed to their land and people. Taufiq's daughter Leila recalls how difficult it was for her father to access the villages and hamlets where his patients lived. He had to travel on horseback for hours, carrying a bag full of medicine.[326]

During the nine years that Canaan was head of the Polyclinic of the Municipality of Jerusalem and of the Laboratories of the Sinai Front, he was able to carry out his medical work in the countryside. His work took place in the Palestinian hinterland, the Negev Dessert, the Sinai Peninsula and Transjordan. His medical services though, were not offered for free, at least this is what Yasma, Taufiq's daughter reported in her memoirs.

> "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 his 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."[327]

The poverty of some of Canaan's patients led him to think about solutions that could benefit both, the patients and himself. We could say that the historical conditions allowed Canaan to acquire amulets directly from his patients; items that combined with those he purchased became the material that now we find in the T.C.C.P.A.

3.7 Taufiq Canaan, the collector, the archivist.

> "…um 'corpus' é um conceito válido se não for tomado como uma metáfora acessível, mas em sou sentido literal do corpo. As partes de um corpus vivo desenvolvem uma vida em comun assim como o corpo vem à vida, cresce e atinge seu desenvolvimento presente."[328]

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326 L. Mantoura, "Father, Friend and Inspiration", in K. Nashef (ed.) *Ya kafi, Ya shafi, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* (Palestine: Birzeit University Publications, 1998): 9-15.

327 Y. Canaan, "Some Biographical Notes on Dr. T. Canaan, Society and Heritage." *Society and Heritage* 15 (1981): 147-152.; Cfr. U. Huebner and B. Merschen, "Tawfiq Canaan and His Contribution to the Ethnography of Palestine", p.255

328 " a 'corpus' is a valid concept if it isn't taken as an accessible metaphor, but in the literal sense of the body. The parts of a living corpus develop a life in common as the body comes to life, grows and reaches its present development." Translated by the author Cfr. J. Fabian, "Colecionando Pensamentos", p.65

Collecting objects is a form of making archives. The collector makes his own archive out of artefacts, notes, and all kinds of information registered and related to the artefacts. The different parts of a corpus have their own life but when coming together they develop integrally as a whole through time and space. In this subchapter, the corpus under scope is the T.C.C.P.A., the way it was conceived and formed. As any other ethnographic collection, its formation occurred out of the selection of specimens that best represented analytical categories. Next to using archives as sources of historic truth, Ann Stoler brings our attention to the place and form of archives in history in order to reflect on how they show the colonial order of things.[329] The Canaan Collection, a private collection, although not an official or imperial archive, was established based on selection and purpose. What story did Canaan aim to tell by collecting samples of autochthonous medical practices? How did he articulate such a story on Palestine's folk medicine?

3.7.1 Motivations

Taufiq Canaan's collecting efforts displayed his conscious and unconscious ideas about what constituted valuable and useful objects and information. Canaan operated as a collector out of genuine interest, feeling responsibility towards his culture, and academic effort, but he was also conditioned by colonial cultural practices. It is impossible to grasp Taufiq Canaan's complete ethnographical work without considering his collecting enterprise. As for his collection, it would be incomplete to approach it without considering his ethnographic writings in a sort of intertextual conversation.

Canaan's motivations for collecting amulets, as discussed in the previous section, were triggered by an individual interest in medical practices, by his passionate research on Palestinian folklore and by the unfolding political events in a context of progressive occupation, which forced him to take action against the displacement and erasure of Palestinian culture. Beyond these personal motivations, however, Canaan's collecting activity was defined by and embedded in colonial practices. Gathering samples of folk medicine was a common activity of physicians contemporaries of his. Their work resonated with and within the framework of archival science of the time, in which information was systematically selected, compiled and organised.

Canaan was outspoken about his interest in studying and recording autochthonous Palestinian customs, that according to him were slowly disappearing due to the colonial regime and the modernising forces that had led to an unprecedented urbanisation process. In this way, collecting

[329] A. Stoler, "Colonial archives and the arts of governance", p.87

samples of traditional forms of medicine was motivated by two reasons. On the one hand, these were evidence of a pre-existing Palestinian culture that had been present for a long time. On the other hand, collecting so many different kinds of objects aimed to show how rich, diverse and inclusive this autochthonous culture had been for centuries. In this sense, his works although deeply immersed in ideas of safeguarding Palestine's folklore, provided an insight into Palestine's medical practices.

Palestine's folklore had been the result of a particular conceptualisation of the beliefs and customs of the local population as backwards. According to Samuli Schielke "folklore studies approach the "popular", "traditional" or the "lower class culture" as interesting subjects of an anthropological study, but do not consider them worthy of the same appreciation as the "real" high culture and religion."[330] This was the case of the generation of folklorists that carried out work in Palestine during the first half of the 20th century. Canaan shared this view, and by emphasising his scientific formation and approach to autochthonous medical practices and artefacts that he documented, he took distance and established the difference between the autochthonous Palestinian culture and the culture that he was representative of. The more he researched folk medical practices of the lower classes and peasants, the further he distanced himself in order to observe and conceptualise it. For the modern doctors/ethnographers a*l-ṭibb al-taqlīdī* or traditional medicine was a residual form of medicine that could very well be replaced. It was in principle a form of medicine that had operated within a rational and natural mode. Heir of the Islamic medical tradition it was subjected to the logic of the pre-modern Neoplatonic and Aristotelian Muslim physicians, who had left treatises about it. However, it had become a diversified magical or religious medicine whose only contact point was the recourse of the supernatural.[331]

3.7.2 Choices in documentation

Canaan accompanied his amulets with extensive documentation. Each item was registered in his notes with information about the place of provenance, the materials, the owners, the price and the ways of use. Some of the amulets are better documented than others. The information he provided might have been what was available to him, but we should not exclude the possibility that he made

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[330] S. Schielke, "Habitus of the Authentic Order of the Rational, Contesting Saints Festivals in Contemporary Egypt", p.166

[331] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p.36

choices on what to record and what to omit. When thinking of the amulets as ethnographic evidence, their documentation provides exactly what the ethnographer wanted to reveal.

For the classification and documentation of the objects, Canaan used specific language and categories that were imbued in a context of Western medical science and German Orientalism.[332] But since he was part of the nativist generation of Palestinians, whose ethnographic work tried to focus on the *emic* categories, Canaan's language in the description of the objects carefully combined English and German concepts with the Arabic terms used by the users. Most objects were not referred to as *ḥijāb* (amulets or talisman), but instead, according to their shape: *khamsa* (for hand-shaped amulets), *khiyār* (for cucumber-shaped amulet containers), *'ayn* (for eye-shaped amulets/beads); to the material used: *badhr pl. budhūr* (seeds), *ḥajar* (stone), *raṣāṣ* (lead metal), *shabba* (alum); to the problem/ailment that they aimed to cure: *khirzat al-ḥalamāt* (nipple bead), *khirzat al-ḥalīb* (milk bead), *khirzat al-marāra* (gallbladder bead), *ṭāsat rajfa* (fear cup); and to the way they were used: *khirzat kabbās* (pressure bead, to be pressed against the body), *ṣalā* (prayer, to be read or recited), *'aqd* (knot/knotting/tying, to be tied) etc.

The description Canaan provided for some amulets is very detailed. It includes information about the gender, age and religious confession of the user/owner of the amulet. This points to the fact that he, as a collector, considered important to be precise in defining the background of the users of certain items. The items that are best documented were given to him as gifts by members of prominent families such as al-Ansari and al-Husaini, and from well-known sheikhs. The reason that the details about the owners/users of the objects were so elaborate, might be that the donors were well-known in Palestine's society, and some of them were acquaintances of Canaan. Although the use of these objects is mentioned, the documentation revolves more around the identity of the donors. It seems to me that specifying the identity of the users could have been done to show how widespread the use of amulets was, pointing to their presence in rural and urban areas, and used among people from different social backgrounds. The documentation of the amulets that Canaan obtained from his own patients (mostly from rural areas) is very different. Their description is full of remarks about their use. The patients are not identified by name, but by gender and age. This omission of the patients identity and his choices in providing details about the amulets and the owners in other cases, indirectly indicated what for Canaan entered in the category of folk

[332] K. Nashef, trans. *Majmū'a Tawfīq Kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kan'ān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished.

medicine, and whom from among his interlocutors (patients and donors) could be studied or objectified in ethnographical terms.

Another aspect in Canaan's documentation is the mention of the religious affiliation of the amulets' makers and users. This information is very scarce, it only appears in the description of a few amulets, probably those given by users who openly expressed their religious affiliation. In general it seems that for Canaan it was not useful to explain the real function of the amulets within one or another confessional domain, because the amulets were most of the time used by everyone. But, by recording such information he disclosed the widespread use of amulets, and the different forms in which healing and protection could be sought, as well as the blurred boundaries between religious confessions in the everyday use of amulets.

3.7.3 Stages of collecting

Many different stages can be observed in the collecting process of Taufiq Canaan. Khaled Nashef has gone through Canaan's process of collecting and informs us about the lack of information in Canaan's notes for the first objects he got. This suggests that at the beginning, the acquisition of objects did not foresee the creation of a collection.[333] In analysing consecutive years of collecting, I can distinguish a second stage, when he worked as an itinerant doctor in Palestinian villages between 1910 and 1919. By systematically interviewing his patients about the use of amulets, Canaan provided detailed information about their use.[334] This period of close contact with the peasants and semi-nomads was decisive for his research, and provided the framework to understand autochthonous medical practices, their dynamics and inner mechanics. In fact, we can observe that Canaan amassed the vast majority of amulets in this 9-year period.[335] The knowledge allowed him to later purchase other (similar) objects that circulated in the networks of the antiquarians and markets. This third stage of collecting, predominantly through purchasing, took place after 1919. It involved other actors such as antique dealers, shop sellers, and amulet traders. Objects bought in markets, may have been selected based on the uniqueness of the materials, their use or peculiarity, or could have been samples of the same kinds Canaan already had. One way or another, these later objects may have been acquired with the aim to expand the collection. Once having defined the

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[333] K. Nashef, trans. *Majmū'a Tawfīq Kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kan'ān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished.

[334] T. Canaan, unpublished catalogue in German.

[335] The amulets that Canaan got per year can be seen in Table 2 in the Appendix B.

nature of his collection with a substantial amount of items, it must have been easier for Canaan's acquaintances to collaborate in his collecting project through gifts. With more objects, Canaan could show more particularities and nuances within the autochthonous medical practices. This third stage lasted until 1947 when Canaan was forced to stop collecting. A fourth stage begins when he had to put all the amulets in storage. Without any possibility to access them like before, the collection was no longer modified.

3.7.4. Acquisition of amulets

Canaan acquired his amulets in three ways: by donation, purchase and in lieu of payment for his medical services. These forms of collecting show different networks and correspond, to some extent, to different moments of Canaan's life and professional work. The three forms of acquisition also correspond to the socio-economic status of Canaan's interlocutors.

The amulets obtained in lieu of payment make the smallest group. Canaan obtained them from 1910 to 1919 in exchange for the medical services he offered in the countryside while working at the Laboratories of the Sinai Front and at the Polyclinic of Jerusalem. His patients were mainly peasants and bedouins, who were treated in their respective villages. The engagement with his patients are registered at times, showing that the obtention of amulets did not always take place immediately after the first meeting. Notes on specific objects show that patients were not always willing to give their medical remedies away. Instead they made replicas, which they donated to the doctor.

The presence of replicas shows that Western medicine was not adopted at once and that many of its features were actually discarded and rejected at first since they have not proved to be as efficacious as the amulets. Replicas disclose the demand of particular objects.[336] Canaan's replicas show the ease with which amulets could be reproduced. Manufactured by the users themselves, these replicas were intentionally ineffective. Made with the same materials and following the same procedures, they were however, generally not activated through a ritual action and did not serve the same function. In this sense, the replicated amulets were made with the only aim to pay Canaan's services.

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[336] W. Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility,* Cambridge MA: Belknap, 2008

Many of the amulets that Canaan collected in lieu of payment were used by children. Canaan mentioned repeatedly that children were the main users of amulets because of their vulnerability;[337] they would get sick very often due to the effect of the *jinn* and the evil eye. Therefore, mothers would make sure that their children were well protected by fastening amulets to their clothes and hanging them in their cradle. In his medical consultations Canaan engaged with the children and the mothers, the ones who actually negotiated the exchange of amulets for his medical treatment. The fact that children were Canaan's most visited patients points to the important role that women (the mothers) played in engaging with modern doctors. They became the ones responsible for accepting new medical treatment and for adapting some elements to their own customs.

Amongst the amulets obtained in lieu of payment, is for instance no. 186. It is a thin, 6cm-diameter, round, black plate made of tin, pierced in the upper part so it could be used as a pendant.



Fig. 16 Amulet made of tin. Catalogued no. 186
Tawfik Canaan Collection
Photo taken by the author

337 T. Canaan, "The child in Palestinian Arab superstition", p.181

Six glass beads, two blue, two green and two brownish red are fastened to the tin plate with a black cotton thread. The plate is inscribed on both sides with a not very neat Arabic inscription. According to K. Nashef it reads on one side the year 1689 b.C.; on the other side it contains the statement: anything obtained in a tomb prolongs life and keeps the *qarīna* away.[338] This amulet was used by a child from the village of Dayr Yasin, Canaan took it in 1917 during a medical visit. The inscription on this amulet makes reference to the protective power it has due to its provenance. The inscription tackles two very important concerns in the life of a child. On the one hand, the protection from a particular kind of female demon, the *qarīna,* considered to be responsible for the premature death of children and, on the other, the expectation to live a long life without any kind of disease.

A second group of objects comprise the amulets that Canaan bought. The place of obtention is not registered for all amulets, but among those that do indicate it, around one third actually came from Jerusalem. Some of them were purchased in antique shops. Canaan specified the name of the antiquarian: Ohan, Klayn, and Muhammad Ali.[339] They seem to have been part of trade networks where collectors could purchase objects. Other objects may have been obtained in shops like those of the parfumiers (*ʻaṭṭārīn*), barbers (*ḥallāqīn*) and eye doctors (*kaḥḥālīn*), whose role in providing healing and protective remedies remained quite important in towns, even while biomedicine was already widely practiced there.[340] The rest of the amulets were purchased in other locations where Canaan had the opportunity to visit for work. Purchased amulets include many pieced of jewellery, like the bracelets and necklaces from Bedouin origin, and the group of amulets made of *ḥajar mūsā*, discussed in Chapter 2 and 4.

Next to the amulets obtained as payment, and the purchases, there is a third group that comprises the objects that were given to Canaan as gifts. The donors included three groups of people. First, individuals who interacted with Canaan in his collecting activity including some foreigners who belonged to his close circle of colleagues. They seem to have formed a significant group aware of Canaan's collecting activity. Lydia Einsler, wife of Adolf Einsler who was a

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[338]The inscription of item 186 reads *Piece of tin obtained from a tomb, with three blue beads. Written on it the year 1689 (?) before Christ, and anything obtained in a tomb prolongs life and keeps the* qarīna *away (rare). Taken from the cap of a Muslim child from Dayr Yāsīn in 1917. (translated by the author); Cfr.* Nashef, K. Edit. *Ya kafi, Ya shafi, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* Palestine: Birzeit University Publications, 1998

[339] K. Nashef, trans. *Majmūʻa Tawfīq Kanʻān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kanʼān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished.

[340] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p.67

colleague of Taufiq Canaan at the German Diaconesses Hospital, is probably the most prominent. She was also a collector and exchanged with Canaan many objects. The second group includes individuals and members of prominent families in Canaan's urban milieu. Some of them were religious authorities, others, professionals and members of the urban bourgeoisie of Jerusalem. Most of them donated to Canaan their own amulets or made for him amulets with the purpose to contribute to his collection. Khaled Nashef provides a list of names extracted from Canaan's notes.[341] It includes members of prominent families such as Musa Basha al-Husayni and al-Shaykh Ibrahim Hassan al-Ansari, (*qayim bāshā masjid al-aqṣā wa qubbat al-ṣakhra);* professional amulet makers and practitioners of autochthonous medical practices such as al-Shaykh Mahmud al-Falki from Jerusalem, al-Shaykh al-Nubani (a practitioner of *al-ṭibb al-sha'abī),* Shaykh Atif from the Sufi *tarīqat al-qādiriya;* and other acquaintance from families such as al-Namri, al-Nashashibi, al-Mamluk, Qlibu (Kleibo), Hamuda, Jaltini, Hadad, and al-Barghuthi.

3.8 Engagement with other collectors

Canaan's collecting activity was shaped through his interaction with other collectors and scholars interested in Palestinian folklore. His collecting skills developed by spending time with scholars who also carried out ethnographic research and collected evidence of their study objects. Practical knowledge on how to categorise the objects and write a catalogue must have been acquired from them, some of whom were amateur collectors. After all collecting ethnographic objects was a common practice. From Canaan's diaries and publications we know about some scholars with whom he shared the same interest in studying and collecting Palestine's folklore. One of them was Dr. Kleibo. According to Canaan, he also collected samples of traditional remedies. Other collectors who were not physicians but carried out ethnographic research in Palestine are Henry Spoer and Hilma Granqvist. The relation Canaan had with Henry Spoer is documented in Canaan's article about magic medicinal bowls (*tasit al-rafjeh*).[342] In it he analysed some of Spoer's bowls and compared them to his own bowls. Spoer also collected paper and metal Jewish amulets.[343] Hilma Granqvist was another collector that interacted with Canaan. She was the first woman who carried

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[341] K. Nashef, trans. *majmū'a tawfīq kan'ān li l-ḥujub. makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ tawfīq kan'ān.* Birzeit University. Unpublished.

[342] Spoer, Henry H. "Arabic magic medicinal bowls" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Sep., 1935), pp. 237-256

[343] Spoer, Henry Hans. "Notes on Jewish Amulets" in *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 23rd year, 1904, Part II, p.97-105

out ethnographic research in Palestine with a particular methodology of local scale analysis, and formed a collection of photographs related to her fieldwork in the village of Artas.[344] The photos illustrate her findings that focused on the private life in the Palestinian countryside. We know that Canaan was influenced by her work and methodology. Another important individual who carried out ethnographic research on Palestine's folklore was Lydia Einsler, whose relation with Canaan is particularly interesting because they help each other forming their collections. Their interactions are described in the following section. Ohan was another collector who seems to have played a role in Canaan's collecting and whose relation with him is described in more detail in Chapter 4. The last collector in the list is Henry Wellcome, who requested from Canaan the formation of a smaller collection. Canaan was not in direct contact with him, but became acquainted through intermediaries. Despite the fact that Henry Wellcome lived in London, he still became a defining factor in Canaan's development as a collector. The relation between them is analysed in Chapter 5, in which Canaan's political motivations are discussed.

3.8.1 *Lydia Einsler (Jerusalem, 1855-1944)*

The role of Lydia Einsler in Canaan's collecting process is important inasmuch as they were close friends and formed collections with objects of the same kind.[345] In fact Einsler's collection is probably the only one that, like Canaan's, contains artefacts used for protection and healing among rural inhabitants of Palestine during the early 20th century.[346] The similarities in their collections as a whole suggest that Canaan and Einsler exchanged objects as if they both wanted to have similar specimens in their own collections. By the time Canaan started exploring Palestine's folklore, Einsler, who was a bit older than Canaan, had already published some articles about Palestine's folklore including descriptions of the belief in evil spirits, the evil eye, and the role of some saints.[347]

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344 Weir, Shelagh G. "Hilma Granqvist and Her Contribution to Palestine Studies" in Bulletin (British Society for Middle Eastern Studies), Vol. 2, No. 1 (1975), pp. 6-13

345 Z. Durda, and Luisa Goldammer-Brill, *Die Amulettsammlung von Lydia Einsler*, Jerusalem: Deutsches Evangelisches Institut fur Altertumswissenschaft des Heiliges Landes, 2013.

346 There are other collections of Palestinian dresses and jewellery that include objects used as amulets. However they do not focus on them.

347 See the list of publications in the Bibliography. Most of her articles were published in the Zeitschrift des Deutchen Palästina-Vereins where Canaan published at the beginning of his career.

Lydia Einsler was the daughter of Conrad Schick, a German architect, archaeologist and constructor advisor for the urbanisation of Jerusalem in the late 19th century. Lydia got married to the German-Hungarian Dr. Adalbert Einsler (1848-1919); head of the Jerusalem Hospital Bikur Cholim and director at the Lepers Asylum Jesushilfe. Lydia met Taufiq Canaan through her husband who was Canaan's colleague for many years.

Lydia Einsler's interest in everyday culture of Palestine was rooted in her familiarity with the language and customs of the local people. She was born in Palestine and was in close contact with the local Jerusalemite population. Although she was not trained as an anthropologist, she collected "testimonies of traditional customs and manners" that were coming to an end due to the European presence.[348] It is interesting to see that she shared with Canaan the same concern about the decay of agrarian culture, which formed the motivation for both of them to collect amulets. For her the amulets were also representatives of how superstition ruled the customs of the peasants.[349]

The kinds of objects that Lydia collected are very similar to those collected by Canaan. Recorded in Canaan's diaries, both collectors were in close contact and exchanged many items. Between 1909 and 1911 Lydia formed a selection of amulets for the Internationale Hygiene Austellung (IHA) that took place in Dresden in 1911. This exhibition seems to have affected her collecting activity as it shaped the criteria for acquiring objects. The 89 objects that she collected for that event, are currently in the Museum of Ethnology of Dresden. They were bought by the management after their exhibition in the IHA.[350] It is plausible to believe that Canaan was inspired by Einsler's involvement in the IHA. Knowing that Palestinian amulets would be exhibited in an international setting might have been a very attractive idea. Aware of the diverse audience at the fair, Canaan may have helped Lydia to select the most representative objects of Palestine's medical tradition and to show its diversity.

The International Hygiene Exhibition was a fair on medicine and public health. It had an important impact in the medical world at the beginning of the 20th century. This fair was the first one of its kind. As any other international fair, typical of the beginning of the 20th century, the IHA tried to bring the "world" together in one single place, with the aim to make public the latest research on different medical specialties and related disciplines. The contents of this exhibition

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[348] Z. Durda, and Luisa Goldammer-Brill, *Die Amulettsammlung von Lydia Einsler.* Jerusalem: Deutsches Evangelisches Institut fur Altertumswissenschaft des Heiliges Landes, 2013.

[349] Z. Durda and Luisa Goldammer-Brill, *Ibidem.*

[350] Z. Durda, and Luisa Goldammer-Brill, *Ibid.*, p.5

were diverse: Infectious and tropical diseases, cosmetics, chemistry, scientific instruments, health care, and sports. It also included the historical-ethnographic department in which samples of medicinal traditions, such as the objects Lydia Einsler had collected, were exhibited.

Lydia continued collecting after the fair. Particularly, during World War I her collection increased in size. She then acquired many more objects because people were very poor and sold their amulets, jewellery and other belongings.[351] This form of collecting was widespread among Palestinian and foreign collectors and was reproduced during the Nakba and in 1967 too. During times of war and economic hardship, many people recurred to sell their valuable belongings. In one interview, Ms. Widad Kawar reported how she obtained many objects for her collection due to the need that Palestinian women felt to give away their pieces of jewellery to a responsible person who would take care of them.[352] In the same way, Canaan got many of his amulets during the WWI period period; particularly those that were used as jewellery, which went into the hands of the antiquarians.

From the relation between Lydia Einsler and Canaan it is interesting to see their collaboration and the mutual influence. Just as Canaan, Lydia was shaped by the German missionary education and by his close circle of German colleagues. As an inhabitant of Jerusalem, she was very much exposed to the culture of the middle class foreign and Palestinian urbanites, she was also well-known for her father. Einsler must have inspired Canaan's work, particularly her social skills and her idea of exhibiting Palestinian amulets abroad can be seen in Canaan's later years with the formation of Wellcome's collection.

3.9 Conclusion

The artefacts in the T.C.C.P.A would have never been subjected to research, had they not been collected, but they would have never been collected without the interest in the Holy Land and the development of ethnographic work in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Studying the land and the people of Palestine, and collecting ethnographic material from their everyday life resulted from genuine interest amongst foreign scholars, but it served to a great extent to know for the sake of controlling the colonised peoples. Collecting objects of different kinds and taxonomically organising them in categories, served to divulge a certain knowledge about the colonised land and

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351 Taken from the foreword of the article written by Einsler in 1938 in retrospective to her lecture presented in 1911 at the International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden. Cfr. Z. Durda, and Luisa Goldammer-Brill, *Ibid.*, p.7

352 W. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.22

its inhabitants. Nowadays however, ethnographic collections can be studied to disclose the mentality of the collectors and the mechanisms through which these collectors acquired their objects. So, what once served the colonial powers to know the "other" can be used in current research to know how colonial ideas and practices developed through the interaction of locals.

Analysing the Canaan amulets in their phase/aspect of ethnographic data and collectables, discloses the spread of a missionary culture and forms of adaptation to this culture by the local population. Through exploring the way these amulets were collected, we can observe different stages related to the modes of ethnographic engagement that scholars developed throughout the decades. Moreover, Canaan's collecting activity shows in detail the creation of networks and mechanisms behind the processes of the acquisition of amulets. By selling, donating and exchanging amulets for medical services, his interlocutors played an active role in shaping his collecting activity. Canaan's engagement with his patients for example, discloses the agency that they as patients had in negotiating their amulets. They provided replicas in place of active real amulets that they continued to use until the illness/problem was over.

Although collecting ethnographic material was a common practice among foreigners and Europeanised Palestinians, Canaan's project is unique. He articulated his collected material with his written research. Canaan engaged with the amulets as part of Palestine's folklore in different ways according to the circumstances. First, the historical events and the political situation of the country effected his approach to the amulets, from remnants of the Biblical past to constituents of a Palestinian national culture that was important to record. Second, he adapted his views on Palestine's folk culture and expressed them accordingly to the different social circles he was part of. Finally, his approach to the amulets and other aspects of folklore oscillated between his two main academic backgrounds. His scientific education as a committed physician with the colonial hygienisation projects placed him in a position of a moral superiority, while his anthropological formation based on ethnographic fieldwork positioned him in more equal terms regarding his study objects.

In sum, exploring Canaan's amulets in a phase when they acquired value to be studied and collected, lead us to reflect on the complexity of collection formation processes, and the way collectors use objects to tell particular stories. It also shows how the amulets still used for their healing and protective qualities, started to be possessed for what they represented in terms of ethnographic data. These two simultaneous functions occurred in different settings and responded to the ways people interacted with the amulets. However as we see throughout the chapters, the

boundaries between the functions remained fluid as people and objects circulated. Canaan as a person who could transit from one setting to the other was in part able to disclose this fluidity. In the next chapter we explore one more phase in the life of the amulets, that of commodities.

Chapter 4. Amulets as commodities

4.1 Outline

On 4 September 1940, Taufiq Canaan visited Mr. Ohan's antique shop in the old city of Jerusalem where he purchased one copper amulet for 400 mils. After three days Canaan visited him once again to get five more amulets of the same kind, namely arm amulets all made of copper. This time Canaan paid 2250 mils, a considerable amount of money that only few people in Palestine would have destined for the purchase of amulets which were not actually aimed to be used for healing or protective purposes. According to Canaan's notes, he repeatedly bought amulets to enlarge his collection and to complete the small selection prepared for Mr. Wellcome[353]. Most of his purchases took place in Jerusalem's old city market where antiquarians proliferated, but he also got many items from individuals who were not related at all to the antiquities trade.[354] Canaan was not the only one on the hunt for amulets and other objects in Palestine's markets in the early 20th century. Amulets had always been bought and sold by makers and users. Now a third group involved in the commerce of these objects was added: collectors.

This chapter revolves around another stage in the life of the amulets, when they functioned as commodities. In order to become commodities, amulets had to go through a process of commoditisation whereby they lost their personalised and specific characteristics allowing for impersonalised/objective exchange between parties. This exchange was based on the value posed on objects' material and immaterial aspects, such as the use of precious materials, if they were fashionable, new, popular, or reversely antique, old, unique, associated with a special place, or deemed to be efficacious. This value was continuously redefined by the interactions between the manufacturer, the client, the collector, the broker, the seller and the object itself.

By analysing the way amulets were bought, sold, and exchanged, this chapter discloses the commercial dimension of their production, acquisition and circulation in public and private networks. We can see the fabrication and sale of whole (or parts) of new amulets, the sale of used refurbished amulets by travelling merchants, the transfer of amulets within families as heirlooms or

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353 This selection made for Henry Wellcome is discussed in Chapter 5 where I analyse the political implications of Canaan's collecting process, and I explore the way Canaan exported his ideas about national identity to the British public.

354 T. Canaan, *Unpublished catalogue of the Tawfik Canaan Collection (in German)*

between acquaintances as gifts, but also the sale of amulets to antiquities dealers, who again put them in the market to be sold, re-used and re-embodied.

Framed in the first half of the 20th century, the chapter analyses the commoditisation processes of amulets that took place before and in parallel with Canaan's acquisition of his collection. These objects had been circulating as healing and protective remedies among family members, local markets, and pilgrimage sites for long time. However, in the early 20th century another network took shape with the raising interests of ethnographers and collectors. Among them amulets began to acquire value not for being efficacious remedies, but for being ethnographic data and collectibles. The chapter explores how this occurred by taking into account the effects of foreign tourism to Jerusalem, the role of foreign scholars and travellers in the creation of new commercial networks, in which specialised antiques' shops traded objects including clothes and amulets, that were considered part of Palestine's folklore. Finally, the chapter analyses the effects of these networks on the local population, and new forms of consumption in which peasants, bedouin and townsmen operated.

4.2 Commoditisation of amulets

Beyond being considered sacred and magical objects with healing properties, so far the most studied aspect, amulets fulfil other uses and functions. As this thesis shows throughout the chapters, amulets go through different moments in their life as *things.* At each stage, amulets display different qualities. Exploring the aspect of commoditisation adds yet another dimension to the study of amulets and talismans, which focuses on the processes by which exchange value is imagined for and imposed on objects, and on the networks where this exchange value is set, recognised and bargained keeping amulets in circulation. Examining the commoditisation of amulets in early 20th century Palestine brings to light social transformations such as the creation of new professions like the *médecins diplômées*, the antiquarians, the physician-collector, the ethnographer specialist in Palestine folklore; and the cultural practices such as carrying out ethnographic work, forming collections, and exhibiting them abroad. It also discloses processes of selection and the formation of taste in which certain items became fashionable and more desirable.

Amulets in collections have been generally approached as representatives of a particular culture. The interpretation of these objects was connected to and frozen in time at the moment they were collected, as if they were disconnected of any accumulative past or present. Recently, the focus is no longer only on the documentation made by collectors, but also on how these objects

functioned before they became part of collections. However, amulets in collections are still studied as isolated cases, and when used for an exhibition they are always arranged to narrate a particular story around magical, religious and medical practices.

Scholars began exploring amulets as commodities as result of the growing interest in the production and consumption of material goods. The shifting of the attention from the religious, magical and medical functions of amulets to their circulation as commodities came from examples currently available in the marketplace.[355] Amulets of contemporary manufacture sold as sacred souvenirs or ancient amulets available in antique shops clearly exemplified their status of commodities. However, for objects contained in collections that have not circulated in a long time (as commodities) the commodity status is more difficult to trace. This is because details about their acquisition are not always recorded, and even when available, this aspect of their circulation has not attracted much attention. I argue that the reason is that collections' items have been regarded as representatives of an "interesting" culture to be studied; they have been neglected as representatives of the culture that allowed the collection formation to happen. It is only well documented objects, such as museum master pieces, that have been researched in association to the culture they come from and to the way they have been commoditised in the art networks.[356]

Luckily for us the documentation of Canaan's collecting process is very rich. From all his acquisitions, the amulets he purchased might be the clearest and most immediate examples of commoditisation. However, commoditisation also took place during his encounter with patients where the value of the amulets was negotiated and set as a means of payment; moreover, it can also be seen in all amulets that Canaan received as gifts. In other words, commoditisation appears in different forms based on the engagement between amulet manufacturers, users, traders and collectors.

For centuries, even before collectors like Canaan acquired an interest in collecting, amulets were sold by practitioners, bought by clients, and sold again among users. Villagers and townspeople from different social classes, and representatives of religious communities and professions were involved in their circulation. One reason was their efficacy as discussed in Chapter 2. If people had experienced positive outcomes in terms of protection and healing, they would pay a

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[355] Vũ, Hồng Thuật. "Amulets and the Marketplace" in *Asian Ethnology*, Vol.67, No. 2, Popular Religion and the Sacred Life of Material Goods in Contemporary Vietnam (2008), pp. 237-255

[356] A. Wharton's research on the commoditisation of Jerusalem through relics and replicas show that it was only possible to reconstruct the circulation of objects of the past due to their religious relevance. Cfr. A. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*.

lot of money for more amulets. In general terms, because amulets were very much in demand, prices of amulets varied making them accessible to everyone. Amulets were also purchased for aesthetic reasons. Many amulets were simply very beautiful and were acquired to be shown to others. These kinds of embellishment amulets were mostly jewellery and were used as part of women's attire in all regions of the Levant.

Processes of commoditisation have been key in the circulation of amulets. Amulets enter and exit the status of commodity in different circumstances. From the very moment of manufacture some amulets are meant to be sold or exchanged. Others are not, but eventually find their way into networks where commoditisation takes place. Even when amulets have been made with the aim of being gifts, their capacity to become commodities seems to determine their value. As explored in the following section, gifts create an obligation to reciprocate, an exchange that can be seen as a form of commoditisation.

The final purpose of any amulet was to be used as protective or healing means, a phase that has been explored in Chapter 2. Made to serve a medical purpose, amulets were obtained from a sheikh or a professional healer; *a rāqin* or specialist in *ruqya;* or from the perfumiers or *al-'aṭṭārīn*[357]. They could also be purchased at the market or local shrine where sellers would come together to offer pilgrims the latest and most popular remedies. The difference between amulets made for specific clients and amulets available in the marketplace, was that the former were personalised at the moment of their manufacture, while the latter were non-personalised objects that could be used by anyone. The first kind of amulets were usually made and used by only one user, but could be sold in the marketplace if the materials were valuable. The second kind of amulets were manufactured without any particular user in mind and contained elements that were popularly recognised as powerful amulets.

After amulets had fulfilled their initial purpose as healing and protective objects, they would either stopped being used, or entered (again) a commodity status. In this transition they went from being personalised objects to non-personalised objects. In other words, commoditisation required a de-personalisation process whereby objects could be once again used by anyone. In order to be effective and to be used by the new owner, amulets had to go through a *singularisation* process, in which they had to be personalised for the new purpose, reason and conditions, and

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[357] I have here left the plural ending in accusative/genitive since it is the form used in the Palestinian dialect, and it is the way they are known among people.

activated again by a specialist healer. If the amulet was bought by a collector, a different kind of singularisation process took place to give the objects meaning in a new context.

According to Kopytoff, *commoditisation* processes are contrasted to those that led to *singularisation*. In the circulation of objects, these two processes take place continuously. On the one hand commoditisation is defined as the process through which an item gets use value and exchange value. These two kinds of value, appear in things in particular phases of their life. Following Kopytoff's theory of things explored in the Introduction, since things are entangled with society and therefore have a social life, a commodity is rather a status or a certain phase in the life of a thing than a permanent quality. Because commodities result from cultural and cognitive processes, when things move around in time and space, their exchange value is modified.[358] This means that things that are commoditised at times might not enter this phase in a different time in history due to cultural and political restrictions. 'Things move in and out of this phase not because it is a temporal phase, but because they are granted some kind of value which allows them to be exchanged with other things or other products such as services'[359]

Singularisation on the other hand, sets the thing as non-exchangeable. Some things are *per se* singular, meaning that from the very beginning they are excluded from exchange; other things enter this phase of singularisation later. Singularisation makes the thing stand out, become distinct or conspicuous, while commoditisation transforms it into something ordinary, common, day-to-day —even though it may appear singular for the one who acquires it, like a person who gets a gift. Things that are considered sacred and unique such as the black stone of the Kaaba or the communion bread are examples of this singularity. They are socially recognised as not able to be subjected to exchange. This recognition or social agreement on what is singular, is determined historically, and objects that were singular at times, entered the market at others.

Beyond things that are classified as singular to a more or lesser degree, there are things whose commoditisation is *terminal.* Kopytoff uses this term to refer to things in which further exchange is prevented by decree.[360] For instance, in many societies medicine men or healers make and sell medicine that is utterly singular, in other words, that cannot be commoditised. It is

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[358] A. Appadurai, "Introduction. Commodities and the Politics of Value" in *The Social Life of Things*, edit. A. Appadurai, Cambridge University Press, p.16

[359] *I.* Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditisation as Process." in *The Social Life of Things*, edit. A. Appadurai, Op. Cit., p.13

[360] I. Kopytoff, *Op. Cit*., p.75

efficacious only for the intended patient. In this category we can find most amulets and talismans which are personalised and made for one single user, and that are eventually disposed. The *terminal* aspect of amulets' commoditisation, however, can be contested as we explore how they circulate and function in the different stages in their life as things. After having been used as medical treatment, amulets might no longer be efficacious as amulets. They can, however, enter a commoditisation process again as data or ethnographic evidence, souvenirs, jewels and curiosa. If we think of the different phases of the Canaan amulets (as healing and protective remedies, ethnographic material, collectibles, and cultural heritage) the many different forms in which amulets can be commoditised become clear. Considering this endless sequence of exchange in which objects participate, it does not seem appropriate to speak of a terminal aspect to commoditisation of objects. Canaan's amulets have shown that depending on the value attributed to the materials employed, their rarity, and their representativity of the Palestinian culture, they could be commoditised once again, particularly as their circulation shifted from one network to another.

An interesting shift was that of amulets that were put back into circulation due to the value of the materials employed. Personalised amulets usually remained with the user all the time and were not passed on. They were, however, sometimes passed on to members of the family to be re-used when their efficacy was deemed to be especially great. In other cases, due to their valuable materials they could be also passed on as heirlooms or sold after used.

4.3. The manufacture of amulets

Amulets enter the phase of commoditisation from the moment they are manufactured. Making an amulet always comes with the goal in mind, to be used by someone. Unless the amulet is made by the user her/himself, amulets are made to be sold or exchanged. The amulets in the Tawfik Canaan Collection point to different manufacture procedures involving professions such as sheikhs, artisans such as smiths, glassmakers, jewellers, and *al-aṭṭārīn*. Each of them was involved either in the manufacture of components of an amulet, or the amulet as a whole. What follows is the description of their role in the manufacture of amulets.

4.3.1. The sheikhs

Sheikhs have played an important role in the manufacture and distribution of amulets. They usually stand at the beginning of the life of amulets because they have the knowledge about magical, medical and religious textual and oral traditions needed to prepare amulets. The sheikhs who appear

in Canaan's notes belonged to different social classes, religious communities, and lived in different localities. All of them manufactured and prepared amulets and talismans in different ways and with different means depending on their knowledge and social background. Whether they were from a village, from a town, from a Bedouin tribe or from a well-known Jerusalemite elite family, their amulets depended on the materials available to them, their knowledge on the subject and of course the people's demand for certain amulets. Some sheikhs were famous for producing particular amulets, so while a Bedouin sheikh from the al-'Azazme tribe was famous for his herbal remedies, Sheikh Nubani was for his written amulets, and Sheikh Ibrahim Hasan al-Ansari for the amulets connected to *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* such as the pilgrimage certificates he issued and stamped.[361]

In his notes, Canaan mentions approximately 20 sheikhs. Why approximately? Ten of them are identified with their full name, nine of them are identified only by their place of origin, one of them is identified by his religious affiliation, and three are just called "a sheikh", which could refer to anyone of the previous.[362] Those identified by name were very well known individuals. Those whose names are not provided, might have been local ones with not enough reputation, or Canaan did not bother to register their names, because he did not meet them and what he knew about them came through his patients or people who have got their amulets. Their designation as "sheikh" does not mean that all of them had the same status, authority and carried out the same tasks. They did not necessarily have the same education. A sheikh could be either at the head of the religious establishment, a Muslim scholar, a tribal chief, a charismatic man within a *ṭarīqa*, or simply an older person who had acquired authority and prestige, in one way or another.[363]

So what enabled someone to be recognised as a sheikh? The authority and prestige of the sheikhs stemmed from their knowledge on religious matters and their ability to apply their knowledge in everyday situations. Their authority could also result from their capacity to make efficacious amulets. They would write them, assemble them or, activate them in the case of ready-made amulets. Some sheikhs lived in towns or villages and people would go visit them to get their amulets. Others, Canaan mentioned, were wandering dervishes, who visited villages and offered all kinds of amulets for sale. There were many amulet makers and because amulets were so much in

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[361] Amulet no.589 from Canaan's catalogue is a stone from *al-haram al-sharif*. The stone is meant to be soaked in water and the water drunk. The intake of healing properties of stones in this way is very common.

[362] See table with names and objects given to Canaan. Table 4 in Appendix B

[363] Geoffroy, E., "Shaykh", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 June 2019 <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6890>

demand, "charlatans" ventured to make some profit selling amulets supposedly made by famous amulet makers. Amulets from well-known and socially recognised sheikhs were tried by many people. The prestige of these amulet makers could also result from their ethnic origin. According to Canaan, the Sudanese and the Moghrabiten sheikhs[364] —known as such due to their *maghribī* origin — were well known in Jerusalem for their amulets. They manufactured personalised amulets but also would keep a stock of amulets for trade in faraway villages.[365]

Some sheikhs were well-known because they belonged to prominent families such as al-Ansari, al-Husseini, al-Nashashibi, whose religious authority had been acknowledged in Palestinian society for a long time. Other sheikhs were well-known for their knowledge on *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* and *al-ṭibb al-taqlīdī*[366], the traditional medicine that included the use of herbs, seeds and fruits to prepare medication, but also the use of animal body parts, stones, and writing in the preparation of amulets.[367] Some of these sheikhs belonged to a Sufi group (*ṣūfī ṭarīqa)* and their reputation spread among its adherents. Canaan mentions for example Sheikh Atif from the *ṭarīqat al-qādiriya* and Sheikh Mahmud al-Falki from Jerusalem[368], from the *ṭarīqat al-dhāhirīya*. They were professional amulet makers and practitioners of autochthonous medicine.

Most of the amulets prepared by sheikhs contained text, either hand-written or printed. Hand-written amulets were usually made on small pieces of paper, folded or rolled up and kept in a leather or fabric pouch or a metal case. These written amulets were personalised and made for specific clients to be used under prescription following the indications of the sheikh. The contents of the amulets varied from Qur'anic verses to magical formulae, unconnected letters, and signs. They were sometimes copied from manuals or old texts that had been considered part of the

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364 Canaan has transliterated it as such. Cfr. notes on cardboards.

365 Canaan, T., *Aberglaube*, p.92; More about mobility of peasants and circulation of goods among villages in Late Ottoman Palestine Cfr. McElrone, Susynne. "Villagers on the Move: Re-thinking Fallahin Rootedness in Late-Ottoman Palestine", *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54, (2013) pp.56-68

366 *al-ṭibb al-nabawī* or the medicine of the Prophet, is a kind of medicine derived from the Hadith literature where remedies and cures used by prophet Muhammad are followed to letter. On the other hand, *al-ṭibb al-taqlīdī* is a wider category of medicine that may include elements of the medicine of the Prophet but also local remedies not necessarily based on Islamic texts.

367 See Chapter 2 of this thesis, on amulets as healing and protective remedies.

368 Sheikh ʿĀṭif and Sheikh Maḥmūd al-Falkī

magical tradition[369]. Sheikhs also issued printed documents that could be used as amulets. They were printed locally, in Jerusalem, or abroad. Some amulets that Canaan collected came from printing shops in Egypt as discussed below in the next section. Printed matter included pilgrimage certificates, supplications, and prayers; they were believed to protect the household if hung on the wall. They were made for general purposes and could be acquired by anyone. This is shown by the fact that among Canaan's collected certificates, there are a few without name and certification. Only those who had carried out *ziyāra* or pilgrimage to holy places in Palestine could get their certificate personalised. This was done by a sheikh, who as the authority in matter would write the name of the pilgrim on it, sign it and stamp it. Other printed amulets contained stories extracted from the Qur'an, such as the one of *ahl al-kahf*[370], or stories of a particular amulet such as *ḥirz al-andhrūn*[371] and *ḥirz al-ghāsila*[372]. These amulets were distributed without personalising them, because their power rested on the magical quality of the story itself.

Some sheikhs who made paper talismans are the following. Sheikh Mahmud al-Falki—also known as Shaykh Mahmud Basha al-Khatib, belonged to *al-ṭarīqat al-dhāhirīya*. He was a well-known amulet maker from Jerusalem who lived outside the Old City. He lived in *jūrat al-'ināb* until 1948 when he moved to Ramallah where he died in 1954.[373] He wrote a famous book *al-muntakhab al-nafīs min 'ilm nabī allāh idrīs*, which includes a section on *'ilm al-ḥurūf,* where he exposes part of the knowledge he used for amulet-making.[374] His amulets contained inscriptions in special arrangements and letter combinations. Canaan got from him three amulets. The first is no. 837, made of two pieces of glass with a written talisman on them. Prepared for a girl who had epilepsy, the pieces were meant to be submerged in water in order for the writing to be dissolved in it. The

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369 These texts included the works of al-Buni. On how al-Buni's mystical texts entered the magical tradition Cfr. Coulon, Jean-Charles. "Amulets and Talismans in the Earliest Works of the Corpus Bunianum" in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context.* Leiden Studies in Islam and Society Series. Leiden: Brill (in process of publication)

370 The People of the Cave or the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

371 Amulet no. 1075

372 Amulet no. 1076

373 "This place as the name indicates is a pit or a small valley, and the name might come from the fact that this kind of tree, the *'enāb* abounded there… J*awrat al-'enāb* was located nearby Bab al-Khalil outside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City. The place is nowadays part of the National Park of Jerusalem and it is under Israeli control." Cfr. Garcia Probert, M.A. "Twigs in the Tawfiq Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets" in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context*, Leiden Studies in Islam and Society Series. Leiden: Brill (in process of publication)

374 Second edition 1950 Cfr. https://ia800307.us.archive.org/27/items/AlmontakabAl-nafeae/AlmontakabAl-nafeae.pdf

water was drunk afterwards. The second amulet is no. 887, which contains six pieces of paper with inscriptions written with saffron water. The papers were meant to be burnt, one every day. The third amulets is the one catalogued under no. 1065, it contains two sheets of paper, and was written for a girl (no more information is given).

Other amulets issued by sheikhs were made of materials other than paper or combined a paper inscribed amulet with other elements. Sheikh al-Nubani, a practitioner of *al-ṭibb al-taqlīdī* was known for his written amulets but also for his knowledge of medical remedies using herbs and animal body parts. Canaan registered having acquired from him a few items in 1912. Amulet no. 294 consists of seven needles with threads of different colours wrapped in a paper covered with disconnected letters, and used against the jinn. Amulet no. 835 is a shoulder blade of a lamb. Used to cure mental illness, it was cooked in lentils and drunk for three days in a row. Amulet no. 836 is a shoulder blade of a lamb with written inscriptions to keep Satan away. It was hung at the entrance of a house to keep the owners safe from the jinn. No.1065 is a shoulder blade from a lamb. Written against the face paralysis of a man, the bone had to be burnt hanging attached to an olive tree.

Some sheikhs were involved in the production of non-textual amulets. These amulets were based on the traditional knowledge about the use of herbs and the law of similarities for the use of stones that we have explored in Chapter 2. Although the text was not inscribed in the objects, it was through the pronunciation of certain magico-religious formulae that the sheikhs activated their power. These amulets could be produced by many more than the written amulets that needed specialised literate knowledge —a knowledge that some sheikhs did not have. Un-inscribed amulets could be made by artisans or users themselves. In some cases small souvenirs or healing and protective objects functioned as amulets by themselves.

4.3.1.1. Pilgrimage certificates

The fact that Canaan included pilgrimage certificates in his collection of amulets shows that they could be used as protective devices. Similar to amulets for general purposes, these certificates were used by putting them in contact to the person or property aimed to be protected. In Palestine, pilgrimage certificates were issued by the corresponding authorities of the holy places for Muslims, Christians and Jews. However, Muslim visitors to *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* were not considered pilgrims by most scholars and imams.[375] By the time Canaan acquired his certificates, *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* including *Al-Aqsa Mosque* and the *Dome of the Rock* had been for decades under the protection of

[375] See Fada'il al Quds on Muslim pilgrimage

the al-Ansari family. The surname of this family was originally al-Danaf.[376] Canaan registered having acquired amulets from three members of al-Ansari family: Shaykh Yahya al-Danaf[377], Shaykh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, and Shaykh Ibrahim Hasan al-Ansari. Other names of members of the family also appear in the certificates, as issuers or as responsible for their distribution. This is the case of Abd al-Rahman and Abdallah al-Ansari[378], names that appear in the colophon of amulet no. 945. This amulet contains on one side a full list of names of the holy sites, in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Palestine, that must be visited. On the back is a hand-written certificate of pilgrimage that contains many seals. The certificate in question was obtained by Canaan from a pilgrim who used it as an amulet, a fact that can also be deduced from the way it was folded, into a small square.

Among the certificates collected by Canaan we can distinguish three main types of documents. All of them were proof of having visited the holy sites in Palestine and were used as amulets because they were embedded with the *baraka* of the sites. The first type were pilgrimage certificates issued for a particular pilgrim after the completion of his *ziyāra*. This kind of document explicitly mentioned that the pilgrim had completed his pilgrimage. Second were the itineraries of holy places that contained a list of places that the pilgrim had to visit. Third were sheets of paper with pictures of the holy sites. These were probably itineraries, but instead of having a written list, they contained visual representations of the sites. They might have been made for pilgrims who could not read. Based on the evidence provided by Canaan, only the first type of certificates were personalised either by writing down the name of the client or pilgrim,[379] or by stamping them with special seals. Stamping the document was a way of validating it, which also activated its protective power making it ready to be hung on the walls of the pilgrim's house. As for the itineraries, they were also used as amulets, probably because the pilgrims had carried them during their visits. All these documents, with or without trace of ownership, could be passed down and reused by relatives

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[376] K. al-Nashef, Introduction to the translation into Arabic of the catalogue.

[377] In Canaan's notes some of the names of the donors are recorded as al-Ansari, others as al-Danaf, but they refer to the same family. Amulet no. 1094 is a seal from al-Danaf family, used to stamp paper documents used as amulets. This seal was given to Canaan in 1942; Amulets no. 1098, 1099 come from the same donor.

[378] Amulet no. 945 is a full list of names of the holy sites in Jerusalem to be visited by any pilgrim.

[379] No. 947 = 948: Pilgrimage certificate without images with Hebrew inscription. On the back, hand-written certificate. 944: Old pilgrimage certificate with one picture. Obtained in Jerusalem in 1912, from a pilgrim who used it as amulet.

(or others), and after kept circulating within families long after the pilgrimage had been completed.[380] They would keep working as a protective means for the entire family.[381]

The same seals used to stamp pilgrimage certificates were also used to stamp talismans issued to pilgrims. Taufiq Canaan collected a group of 28 seals together with the series of printed and stamped amulets. The seals have various shapes: a sword, a hand (*khamsa*), a circle and a rectangle (with inscriptions). They all came from Shaykh Khalil Badr al-Danaf (al-Ansari)[382], who reported having them in the family for 80 to 100 years, as they had belonged to his grandfather. The stamped talismans form an interesting group of items that deserve more exploration, particularly on the symbolism of the stamps, the inscriptions they bear, the arrangement of the stamps on the sheets of paper, and the ritual context in which these talismans were produced. Although they were issued by the same authorities, the intended use of the stamped talismans differed from the certificates. While pilgrimage certificates and itineraries were first of all a proof of *ziyāra* and used as an extension of the *baraka* of the holy site, the stamped talismans acquired their power not only from the connexion to the holy site, but also from the seals themselves, their shape, the kind of inscription and, as Venetia Porter mentions, from whether the stamp came from a seal engraved in positive or negative.[383] The power of the stamped talismans also might have derived from the arrangement of the stamps on the sheet most of the times creating geometrical and symmetrical designs.[384]

Given the rising number of pilgrims who were visiting the holy places in Palestine, authorities had to produce more certificates, itineraries, and talismans, and what better way to do by using printed documents and seals. The use of seals allowed amulet-making authorities to produce objects with more speed and frequency than hand-written amulets, and make them available to more

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[380] No. 943: Pilgrimage certificate with seals and pictures of the holy sites. Obtained from a pilgrim who used it as an amulet.

[381] The long life of certificates was due to the fact that it was loaded with the *baraka* of the place or of the religious authority who had issued it. Since it was hung on the wall of the house, it protected the house where the pilgrim lived, but also the members of the house, even after the death of the pilgrim.

[382] The seals are registered in the catalogue from no. 1307-1335

[383] V. Porter, *Arabic and Persian seals and amulets,* p.131

[384] For more on the meaning of amulets and inscriptions go to chapter 5. Amulet no. 951 is a talisman composed of eight seals, three squared, five round. It was obtained from a Muslim woman in Jerusalem in 1912. No. 952-957 are sealed talismans manufactured in Jerusalem by al-Ansari family, distributed to pilgrims and inhabitants of the city, and obtained by Canaan in 1913. For the geometrical disposition of the stamps see paper amulets at the Birzeit University Virtual Gallery, http://virtualgallery.birzeit.edu/tour/ethno/coll-items?id=0118

people. Karl Schaefer has discussed the relation between the block-printed amulets and the increase in the number of consumers.[385] Although we are not dealing here with the same kind of block-printed amulets as those analysed by Schaefer, there must have been a co-relation between stamped amulets and an increase in the number of pilgrims requesting them. In the form of a pilgrimage certificate or a stamped talisman with geometrical composition, these printed material seem to have been popular.



Figure 17. Stamped pilgrimage certificate. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. Catalogued no. 942.
Photo taken by the author

[385] Schaefer, Karl. *Enigmatic Charms, Medieval Arabic Block Printed Amulets in American and European Libraries and Museums*. Netherlands: Brill, 2006; Schaefer, Karl. The Material Nature of Block Printed Amulets: What Makes Them Amulets? in *Amulets and Talismans from the Middle East and North Africa in Context*, Leiden Studies in Islam and Society Series. Leiden: Brill



Figure 18. Seals used to stamp certificates and talismans. Tawfik Canaan Collection. P*hoto taken by the author*

Taufiq Canaan collected some certificates that had been issued by Hasan al-Ansari, sometimes referred to as Shaykh Ibrahim al-Danaf. He was responsible for the protection of the holy sites as indicated in all the documents with a reference to him as *nāshir* (publisher/issuer) and *qā'im basha al-ḥaram al-sharīf bayt al-maqdis*.[386] In 1922, Canaan obtained directly from him item no. 941, an amulet meant to be hung in the house.[387] It is said to be a printed illustrated copy of the letter of the Prophet Muhammad to *al-muqawqis*[388]. It contains the family tree of the Prophet and some invocations. Two other items, no 949 and 950, show that the documents distributed by Ibrahim Hasan al-Ansari's were printed —and probably also circulated— outside of Palestine. They were printed in Cairo, Egypt by the publishing house of Amin Afandi Hindiyah: *maṭba'a wa maktabatay amīn hindīh bi al-muskī wa shāri' al-manākh,* and sent to Palestine for their

[386] *qā'im basha al-ḥaram al-sharīf bayt al-maqdis* was the title given to the custodian of *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* which includes the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque.

[387] Cfr. T. Canaan, Unpublished Catalogue to the Tawfiq Canaan Collection/ Nashef, K.

[388] *al-muqawqis* is mentioned in Islamic sources as ruler of Egypt, who corresponded with prophet Muhammad. He was a Greek man, leader of the Copts.

distribution. No. 949 is a supplication with depictions of the Islamic holy sites on the header, and no. 950 is a sheet with the depiction of the three Islamic holy places —in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. These documents must have been printed by thousands, and this printing capacity might have only been found in Cairo.

Under the same authorship are no. 942 and 946, which Canaan obtained in 1913. They are two pilgrimage certificates to the holy sites printed in Jerusalem and issued for diverse pilgrims, they have the picture of the Dome of the Rock. On them there are seals in the shapes of a hand, a sword and circle that might have been added by the Sheikh himself. The certificates have a space to fill in the name of the pilgrim and the issue date. The fact that these certificates have no name on them, points to the fact that Sheikh Ibrahim gave them to Canaan as non-personalised objects, probably with the purpose of contributing a sample to his collection.

4.3.2 Artisans

While a sheikh produced the amulet himself on the basis of his expertise and knowledge, he sometimes relied for some parts of the amulet on the market of artisans and their products. Different kinds of artisans were involved in the manufacture of amulets. They had the hardworking skills to craft materials, but did not necessarily know about informing amulets with magical power. Their products were available in the market to be used as or in the preparation of amulets, meaning that they produced parts that were made into amulets by others, or manufactured whole amulets or objects that functioned as amulets in themselves. These artisans included jewellers, smiths, and glass makers. Smiths manufactured big objects such as the magic bowls,[389] and supplied jewellers with metal sheets and wire for the manufacture of pendants, rings, and amulet cases, among others. Canaan collected a group of magic bowls and dedicated one of his articles to this particular kinds of object.[390] Focusing on the physical features of the bowls and the way they were used in healing treatments, Canaan observed that around 1930's the mass production of magic bowls had replaced the manufacture of handcrafted bowls. This is an indication of the how technologies were adapted in the manufacture of bowls, seemingly more adequate to the demand.[391] Jewellers manufactured

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389 Tawfiq Canaan gives the different Arabic names given to these bowls in Palestine: *ṭaset er-radjfeh, ṭaset er-ra'beh, ṭaset el-ḥōfeh and ṭaset el-ḥaḍḍah.* The names follow the transliteration of Palestinian Arabic. Cfr. Canaan, Tawfiq, "The Fear Cup" in *JPOS* III (1923) pp. 122-131; T. Canaan, "Arabic Magic Bowls" in *JPOS* XVI (1936) pp.79-127

390 T. Canaan, Ibidem.

391 T. Canaan, "Arabic Magic Bowls" in *JPOS* XVI (1936) p. 117

amuletic jewellery by using silver and gold pieces or small objects made of tin and copper. These kinds of objects, available in shops like that of Mr. Ohan, were used right away, or if needed to add a special power, they went through an activation process.[392] In contrast to some written amulets that were kept in pouches and used underneath the clothes, pieces of amuletic jewellery were used to be shown due to their beauty and fine materials.

Canaan mentions that "dealers" visited all these artisans and their respective workshops to get what they needed.[393] I assume that these dealers, as mentioned before, could be the sheikhs, the middlemen sellers who sold to sheikhs or directly to clients, or the antiquarians who would visit the artisans looking for unique objects. This shows that artisans were manufacturers, not always selling directly to clients. The dealers who had a shop in the market were the intermediaries who had a safe steady clientele. In Jerusalem clients were be of diverse backgrounds, they were not only those residents of the city, but the seasonal travels. Traders who sold their products itinerantly such as the wandering dervishes, targeted a different clientele, their business relied on how skilled they were at finding clients. For this they had to study their market to have the amulets that people wanted.

Other important artisans involved in the amulet production were the *khalīlī* glass makers[394]. A number of amulets in the Canaan collection were made of or contained glass beads manufactured in Hebron, a city that in the early 20th century was very well known for its glass production. The Hebron factories made glass products since the 13th century.[395] It was only after 1947 with the Israeli occupation that the commercial activities of the city diminished. The factories were owned by a small number of families and manufactured products such as vases, cups, plates, but also jewellery and beads of many colours and shapes. Based on the analysis of the Canaan amulets, *khalīlī* beads appear mainly in bedouin amulets, suggesting that the Bedouins might have been the main clients of glass beads in Palestine. The Bedouins in question were from the south (Negev Dessert/Sinai), and used beads in the manufacture of their handicrafts and amulets. The way these beads travelled to the south is not documented. It is not clear if the Hebronite glass makers had intermediaries selling their products in the south or if the bedouins bought them at the factories.

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[392] Different activation processes are discusses in Chapter 2 on amulets as healing and protective remedies.

[393] T. Canaan, *Aberglaube*, p.93

[394] *khalīlī* is the demonym for the inhabitants of Hebron

[395] N. al-Jubeh, "Hebron Glass A Centuries-old Tradition", *This Week in Palestine*, Jan. 2007. Cfr. http://archive.thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?id=2133&ed=140&edid=140

By the time Canaan collected his amulets, the glass factories were selling not only in Hebron but also in markets and shops in other cities.[396] Glass beads were sold to amulet makers or to suppliers where people could buy them directly to make their own amulets. These glass beads were deemed to be particularly powerful due to the connection they had with *al-ḥaram al-ibrāhīmī* where Prophet Ibrahim and his family are buried. Many of these beads were sold at the site as souvenirs to pilgrims who took them to their hometown. As already mentioned before in Chapter 2, eye beads of different sizes were particularly famous in the composition of amulets. However the most widespread glass bead was the tiny blue one.

4.3.3 Self-made amulets

Users also manufacture amulets themselves. These were amulets that did not require a specialised technique as it happened for instance with jewellery made by specialist artisans who had the proper tools to pierce and mould metal. These self-made amulets hardly ever included inscriptions, which were left to the specialist amulet makers who knew about the uses and application of specific texts.

Simple in their manufacture, these self-made amulets were very diverse in materials and techniques. They could be made of stones, beads, pieces of wood and metallic pendants. Components of these self-made amulets came directly from the landscape like twigs, seeds, coral, shells and stones, but could also be bought in markets and attached to the amulet. These amulets usually contained many parts that were obtained separately and then arranged by the users themselves. For example, flowers, cloves and seeds set in a string, different stones pierced or used in a pouch, or just a mix of organic material like seeds, leaves, twigs wrapped in a cloth.

Although self-made amulets required very little intervention, they were complex objects content-wise. Each part worked to counteract a particular effect of the illness in the person, so all the parts together would have a more complete effect. This for example is the case of garlic cloves combined with leafs from a particular tree, tied with a red ribbon (no. 1046), or the alum-blue bead-*al-mīs* bead/twig analysed in Chapter 2. These mixed-material amulets were so widespread that the users found their own ways to manufacture their own amulets.

Self-made amulets resulted from the creativity and the needs of every client. They display a knowledge of the sacred landscape of Palestine and the use of natural ingredients. In contrast to printed amulets that were standardised or written amulets with fixed formulae, these self-made

[396] This information was obtained from an interview conducted in 2015 with members of the Natsheh family, owners of Khalili glass factory.

amulets show individuality in dealing with illness and ailments. They disclose that even when a sheikh was not involved in their manufacture, self-made amulets could be very effective. As mentioned before, without proper documentation, it is difficult to assess with certainty which amulets would have been made by users themselves. However self-made amulets were mainly coming from sacred sites, and they were made with natural or mineral ingredients available in their surroundings.

4.4 The passing on amulets

For amulet makers there was no point to manufacture an amulet if there is was no intend to put it into circulation. Although we have previously dealt with the circulation of amulets from the manufacturer to the client, this second part of the chapter goes deeper into the networks where amulets circulated once they had left their manufacturer. In this sense, the chapter explores three ways of passing on amulets: inheriting, buying/selling, and giving/getting gifts.

From Canaan's records, we know that amulets were available everywhere. From the client's hands to consequently his/her relatives', or to a merchant's stock in the village, or in the far away shrine, amulets followed different paths from small-scale to regional inter-village networks. Local networks started with the family, where amulets, if efficacious or made of valuable materials, were passed down from relative to relative. Families could keep such amulets for generations, re-use them as amulets, or simply keep them as a part of the family treasure. In other cases, amulets that were efficacious could be given as a gift to acquaintances, close friends or anyone held in high esteem that was in the need of help.

Amulets were also sold, especially if they were made of valuable metals and stones, or were part of a piece of jewellery. Amuletic jewellery mainly bracelets, necklaces or adornments used as part of the attire that contained particular elements (shapes) were recognised for their protective power. These kinds of amulets had also an aesthetic function. In times of economic hardship, the users of this jewellery were forced to sell their pieces. They would sell to them to jewellery traders, or in the case of an old item, to antiquarians, who were known for having in their stock particular old or unique objects. Once sold these pieces of jewellery could move across villages and towns, reaching markets where they were sold again. Outlets were many, from small stalls to proper shops in city markets or in the markets adjacent to pilgrimage sites, such as the shrines of Nabi Musa. Many of these pieces of jewellery that had been used as amulets entered pilgrims' networks, they

were bought as souvenirs, and many were taken outside Palestine, where they either remained within the family or were passed on again.

Paradoxically, part of this circulation of amulets was the moment when amulets were taken out of circulation, as when they were bought by or donated to a private collector or a museum. In Palestine, ethnographers who focused on Palestinian folklore played an important role in taking many amulets out of the networks they had been circulating in for long time. These ethnographers, Canaan included, aimed to collect samples of a traditional life that was threatened to disappear. The amulets that we find now in collections stopped being available for exchange as they turned into ethnographic evidence of practices that later on were to be considered part of the cultural patrimony of Palestine. This process of *singularisation* —using Kopytoff's terminology— ended the amulet's commodity status in some cases; some were never sold again, others at some point were commoditised again as they were sold, bought or auctioned for private collections' or the market of art/antiquities.

Most of the amulets that Canaan acquired throughout his life were bought in shops from specialised dealers. He bought the majority in Jerusalem, but was also active in other cities and in smaller markets attached to pilgrimage sites. From informal sellers to established shops in markets, in the following section I explore the different outlets where amulets, and materials for amulets were sold, and the availability of amulets and materials for amulets before and during Canaan's collecting activity. I also explore the engagements Canaan had with particular dealers with whom he had regular contact as they became suppliers of objects for ethnographers and collectors.

4.4.1 Al-'aṭṭārīn

> "After their engagement, they went to the Nablus market for their *kisweh* (wedding shopping). Wardeh remembered in detail what she had bought: white rosa silk and three pieces of cut velvet for her traditional dress… for her head, she bought a green scarf, a longer scarf for special occasions, a band of gold coins, and silver *karameel.* From Zakharia, they bought broad silver bracelets and chokers. They also purchased a piece of silk for trousers to go with her costume… Then on to the *attareen* (perfume sellers) and spice market to buy henna, cloves for necklaces, indigo, herbs for tea and amulet beads for protection from evil."[397]

[397] W. K. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.330



Figure 19. Recreation of a bedouin *'aṭṭārīn.* Joe Alon Centre, The Museum of Bedouin Culture
Photo taken by the author

Al-'aṭṭārīn was one of the shopping markets that any engaged woman would visit to get products for her wedding preparations: oils, soap and herbs for her pre-nuptial visit to the *hammām*; but also materials for the preparation of healing and protective remedies against the evil eye such as the amulet beads. Since marriage was one of the most expected and desired moments in the life of women, when exposed to the community, the bride could be the object of the evil eye from other women. Thus, protective beads and specialised amulets had to be carried for protection. Beads were combined in different ways into jewellery or attached to the garments of her attire.

The name of these kinds of shops stood for the people working there. Known as *al-'aṭṭār*[398], they were perfumers in charge of the business of *al-'aṭṭāra.* Part of *al-ṭibb al-taqlidī*, these specialists knew how to use herbs and minerals for medical remedies. The business and knowledge of *al-'aṭṭārīn* was kept among members of a family, but could also be taken over by anyone after learning about the ingredients and the methods in the manufacture of perfumes and other

398 *al-'aṭṭār* pl. *al-'aṭṭārūn/al-'aṭṭārīn*

remedies.[399] It would take up to several years to become knowledgable about all kinds of products and their application in the treatment of illnesses, as well as to know all new the herbs that entered the market as trade developed and opened up to new regions. Moreover, they also had to be acquainted with whatever had been written about herbs in manuals.

Al-'aṭṭārīn shops were available mainly in towns, and would sell different products according to the location. Revising an inventory of the products that were available in these shops in Jerusalem by the late Ottoman period (see Table 2)[400], and an inventory prepared by the Museum of Bedouin Culture in the late 20th century of products sold among bedouin *'aṭṭārīn* (Table 3)[401], we can see that the products varied. There were local and imported products in the Jerusalem shop, and more local products were sold in the bedouin case. This can be explained by the fact that Jerusalem had become a crossroad where products from different origins were available. Moreover, as a cosmopolitan centre, its population was very diverse and products coming from different regions were available from the demand of the different groups living in the city. Although it is not under the scope of this research to track the networks of imports that were sold at *al-'aṭṭārīn*, it is important to reflect on the accessibility to medical products in Jerusalem and other towns and the effect this had on the centralisation of medical facilities in urban settings. As new imported products arrived from abroad, they were included in the stock of *al-'aṭṭārīn* and some were incorporated into healing remedies. In Jerusalem or at the bedouin *'aṭṭārīn*, the predominance of certain products might have indicated the practitioners' and clients' preferences and demands. So, even when circulation of new products occurred, their successful incorporation in the market might have been subjected to their efficacy.[402]

Amulets are not listed in neither of the inventories of the two cases mentioned above, this is because, as previously discussed, amulets were not ready-made objects for sale in *al-'aṭṭārīn* shops,

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[399] M. al-Nasri, "Sūq al-'aṭṭārīn.. siḥr tūnis al-'atīqa fī rawā'iḥiha," *al-'arabī al-jadīd*, Sept. 2019, https://www.alaraby.co.uk/سوق-العطارين-سحر-تونس-العتيقة-في-روائحها

[400] P. Bourmaud, *Ya Doktor*, p.84

[401] The Museum of Bedouin Culture situated in the Joe Alon Center, which is 27km northeast of Be'er Sheva, behind Kibbutz Lahav. The permanent exhibition includes a reproduction of a bedouin *'aṭṭār* shop including all kinds of products sold there. The research behind the curation of the permanent exhibition was carried out with the advice of Aref Abu-Rabia.

[402] The use of industrialised amulets in the Negev occurred but the traditional roles of healers continued to exist. Cfr. Popper-Giveon, A., Abu-Rabia, A., & Ventura, J. "From White Stone to Blue Bead: Materialised Beliefs and Sacred Beads among Bedouin in Israel." *Material Religion The Journal of Objects, Art and Belief*,

rather they could be prepared with the products available there. In other words, some products had the potential to become amulets, they could be used in protective methods, healing treatments, or in order to attain good luck. Each one of the products was known for its particular properties and they were used in accordance to local knowledge based on sheikhs' recommendations, and local preferences. Many of the ingredients were used in curative remedies, they were particularly known to have a magical effect such as the alum or the love potion[403]. The Canaan Collection comprises many amulets made with ingredients available at *al-'aṭṭārīn.* Alum for example, was widely used in the manufacture of amulets and it was purchased in these shops. As we have seen alum could be used alone or in combination with other materials. Other ingredients available for sale were cloves, hibiscus, black pepper, etc.; spices used in amulets. A more detailed list of materials used for the preparation of amulets can be seen in Table 5. Based on the fact that amulets were not only prepared by practitioners, but also by users themselves, *al-'aṭṭārīn* were a perfect supplier for people who, like Wardeh, wanted to purchase beads to attach them to the clothes or set them in an amulet to be carried in a pouch.

4.4.2 Pilgrimage, holy souvenirs and amulets

Inhabitants of Palestine who have been users, buyers, sellers of amulets and/or of materials to make them, have played a role in their commoditisation. We have mentioned before the role of sheikhs and artisans in manufacturing amulets, and how local inhabitants would acquire them in different locations such as city markets, at specialised shops, at the sheikh's practice. Other locations that were key in the circulation of amulets were pilgrimage sites. They ranged from small tombs of local saints to big shrines such as those in Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem, Nabi Rubin, Nabi Saleh, and Nabi Musa. Local and foreign pilgrims visited these places and acquired souvenirs and objects sold there.

Since the Byzantine era Christian, Jewish and Muslim pilgrims who have visited sites mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, have acquired artefacts whose significance is based on their connexion to the holy sites.[404] Christian pilgrims were interested in relics such as bones of saints, garments, and shrouds of Biblical figures, which were highly priced for their spiritual and healing

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[403] Love potion: it is a resin obtained from a tree called *kalkh* or giant fennel (lat. *ferula sinaica*) autochthonous from the Maghreb. It is also called *fasūkh* because it nullifies any kind of magic work. There are two kinds, one the white resin is used to cure poisoning or intoxication, the black one is used as incense externally and internally by infusing it or boiling it, or crushing it. Cfr. The Museum of Bedouin Culture.

[404] M. Kersel, "The Trade in Palestinian Antiquities", *Jerusalem Quarterly* 33 (2008) 21-38, p.22

power.[405] Muslim pilgrims coming from other parts of the Levant on their way to Mecca stopped in Palestine's holy sites, where they aimed for objects related to figures in Islamic history such as prophets, the *saḥaba*, and the martyrs who died in battle during the Crusades.

Some of these pilgrims were merchants who travelled for their work and also often visited the holy sites during their journeys providing to local merchants objects manufactured in other places. In the 17th century, the Arab writers Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (1641-1731) and Mustafa al-Bakri al-Siddiqi[406], visited Jerusalem to perform *ziyāra.* They recorded in their travelogues that by that time Jerusalem and other cities such as Bethlehem, Mar Saba, Nablus, Hebron, etc. were already part of multidirectional flows of visitors and goods that established strong commercial and cultural bonds between the northern and southern parts of the Levant and beyond, providing the ideal network for the circulation of many kinds of amulets. This "multifarious nature of pilgrimage" as Jacob Norris calls it, tackles the often assumed unidirectional flow of western visitors and their role as main buyers of goods.[407]

The 19th century inaugurated a new phase in the history of pilgrimages to the Holy Land resulting from the economic opening brought by the Tanzimat Reforms. The influx of foreign pilgrims into Palestine increased dramatically, but also the kind of pilgrims and the way pilgrimage was carried out. Pilgrims from all Christian denominations travelled from Europe to visit the holy sites in Jerusalem and other cities. These pilgrimages were mainly organised by the Christian missions, who had set their own pilgrimage routes that included different places according to their denomination. With these *en-masse* but organised pilgrimages, a more suitable infrastructure was developed to accommodate pilgrims and their needs. As the pilgrim business became more and more profitable, many merchants oriented their activities towards it. The development of this new form of pilgrimage, stimulated the production of material goods associated to the pilgrimage sites. Sacred souvenirs, as I call them, had to be produced faster and in much bigger amounts, as we already discussed before in the context of the pilgrimage certificates and magical bowls.

With the development of this new form of pilgrimage, the visits to holy sites by local Muslims, Christians and Jews had to be adapted to the new conditions as well. Locals carried out pilgrimages to many other sacred sites, in fact Jerusalem's holy places were only few among

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[405] Op. Cit. M. Kersel, p.22

[406] A Syrian Sufi who traveled in the region in the mid-18th century, Cfr. Norris, "Exporting the Holy Land: Artisans and Merchant Migrants in Ottoman-Era Bethlehem," p. 23

[407] J. Norris, "Exporting the Holy Land: Artisans and Merchant Migrants in Ottoman-Era Bethlehem," p.23

hundreds of sites scattered all over Palestine. Throughout the year, these smaller local sites were mostly visited by inhabitants of the surrounding villages. However, annual celebrations would usually attract larger audiences, with people travelling to a particular shrine even from far away.[408] By early 20th century, when Canaan collected his amulets, four sites were the most visited. The annual celebrations carried out there were fertility rituals related to the agrarian calendar. In September, a festival was held at the shrine of Nabi Rubin (close to Jaffa). The shrine was part of the *waqf* and was visited by people from the vicinity of Jaffa, Ramleh and Lydda. In spring, the commemoration of Nabi Saleh took place in the village by the same name. Around the time of the Greek Orthodox Easter, people from around Jerusalem and far away villages would gather and carry out processions to Nabi Musa. On the 17th of November, the ceremony at the Church of St. George (al-Khader) in Lydda, marked the end of the olive harvest.

These local pilgrimage sites gave space for the circulation of goods in a very important way. Accounts of pilgrimages to regional sanctuaries show how attire (including dress, jewellery and amulets) functioned to demarcate the place of origin, and how aware women were regarding the differences in styles and materials used in each village. [409]. Encounters during the *mawasim* served to get acquainted with new styles, to influence and exchange (buying/selling) jewellery.

The goods that circulated as the outcome of the pilgrimages to Palestine, functioned in different ways as links to the holy sites. Wharton has analysed different forms of reproducing Jerusalem in objects that have been circulating for centuries. Although the material she analyses is different, because she does not deal with amulets *per se*, the three forms of reproduction she proposes are useful to explore Palestinian amulets. According to her, relics, souvenirs and replicas are three ways to "possess" Jerusalem (through its different holy sites). From Canaan's collection we can distinguish two kinds of amulets that pilgrims obtained from holy sites or in connection to them that fit into Wharton's category of relic and souvenir. On the one hand, there were objects that possessed the *baraka* of the holy place, and for this reason they were taken back home, abroad or to other cities. People would cherish them and take them along if they travelled or moved and they would be given as gifts or be inherited, thus quite often ending up far from the places where they were originally obtained. These amulets from holy sites share with Wharton's definition of relic the fact that they have an identical nature to what they represent.[410] On the other hand, some objects

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[408] W. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.251

[409] W. Kawar, *Threads of Identity,* p.297

[410] A. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, p.50

that Canaan collected were sold as souvenirs, such as the pilgrimage certificates. They acted as souvenirs because they reminded the pilgrim of his visit to the holy site. However, once in the pilgrim's possession, the certificates could be fold, carried as amulets or hung on the wall of their house for protection. In this way, they acquired the function of a relic as they were seen as extensions of the *baraka* of the place they originated.

This fluid nature of souvenirs and relics can be complemented with that of the replicas. With the increasing demand for amulets, many objects might have been replicated to be sold and to maintain their availability in the market. Once bought these replicas could be activate and used as amulets; their efficacy in this case did not rely on the skills of the manufacturer but on the process of activation. These replicas acquired an actual power when the user took them to a particular shrine or to a practitioner to endow them with magical power. Moreover, the replicas that Canaan acquired from his patients became souvenirs of his ethnographic experience, and souvenirs of a form of life in Palestine that was coming to an end. Canaan's amulets show that the boundaries between the different forms of representing Jerusalem become blurred as we explore the different stages in the life of an object.

Canaan documented many pilgrimage sites in his famous work *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*, however only a few of these sites were origin of his amulets. *Al-ḥaram al-sharīf* and Nabi Musa are two sites where Canaan got many objects. What follows if the description of these two holy sites and the relevance in the manufacture and circulation of amulets. These two sites have been visited by many pilgrims because they are believed to be source of blessings, and visiting them provide good health and protection. However, they differ from each other in the way pilgrimage is carried out, as well as in the kinds of pilgrims that visit the places.

4.4.2.1 Al-ḥaram al-sharīf

In the heart of the old city of Jerusalem, *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* has received Muslim pilgrims for centuries. Visitors to the holy site included local Jerusalemites, inhabitants of other parts of Palestine, the Levant, and from faraway lands. Since Jerusalem was located not very far from the *ḥajj* caravan route that set out from Damascus to Mecca, it was a common stop for pilgrims, who often made a detour on their way to or returning from Mecca. Other Muslim pilgrims would carry out visits exclusively to Jerusalem's holy sites. Only after the Tanzimat, non-Muslims were permitted to visit *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* but with special permits. Christians pilgrims going to Jerusalem aimed to visit the Holy Sepulchre and other sites in Jerusalem's surroundings for their

connexion with Jesus. For them, *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* was not part of their itineraries, and visits to this beautiful building were out of curiosity. However their presence in the Old City and their demand for particular goods effected the market's offer.

Al-ḥaram al-ṣharīf was visited by Muslims due to its importance in religious history so it functioned as a site for the confluence of pilgrims from many different origins. For the local population praying at *al-masjid al-aqsā* and visiting al-*qubba al-ṣaḥrā* (the Dome of the Rock), constituted part of their everyday religious life. However, for visitors from other parts of Palestine and beyond, these visits took place sporadically. During their visits, pilgrims could buy holy souvenirs from the shops adjacent to the site. Some were souvenirs to take back home, other objects functioned as containers of the *baraka* of the place. These goods sold around the Temple were not all produced in Jerusalem, some came from surrounding villages: Lifta, Malha, Deir Yasin, En Kerem, Ezariiya (Bethany), Beit Hanina, Shu' fat, Silwan, and Abu Deis. They all contributed greatly to the local economy of Jerusalem. [411]

The most common souvenirs from *al-ḥaram al-sharīf* were the pilgrimage certificates. Made by the authorities of the site, these certificates were sold to pilgrims who wanted certified proof of completion of their pilgrimage. Taufiq Canaan collected these kinds of certificates, some were printed in Cairo and sold in the shops adjacent to the holy site. These certificates could be bought by anyone, but they needed to be signed or stamped by the authorities. Other objects obtained in the site were written amulets from sheikhs such as printed letters of protection with magical signs, and were sold in the time of Ramadan.[412] We also know about the wood of *al-mīs*, that was obtained from the trees that grow in the esplanade of the Temple, which were associated to the protective power of the jinns. This type of wood was used in mixed amulets, as explored in Chapter 2.

4.4.2.2 Nabi Musa

A very interesting group of amulets in the Canaan Collection comes from the *maqām* of Nabi Musa. The documentation points to the fact that amulets were not only sold there, but manufactured on site. Located on the road that connects Jerusalem to Jericho, Nabi Musa is a site that has witnessed the confluence of people and products from different origins. Its construction dates back to 1269 when the Mamluk Sultan Baibars built a small shrine dedicated to the prophet Moses, at the spot

411 W. Kawar, *Threads of Identity*, p.203

412 Kriss & Kriss, *Volksglaube im Bereich des Islam*, p.148

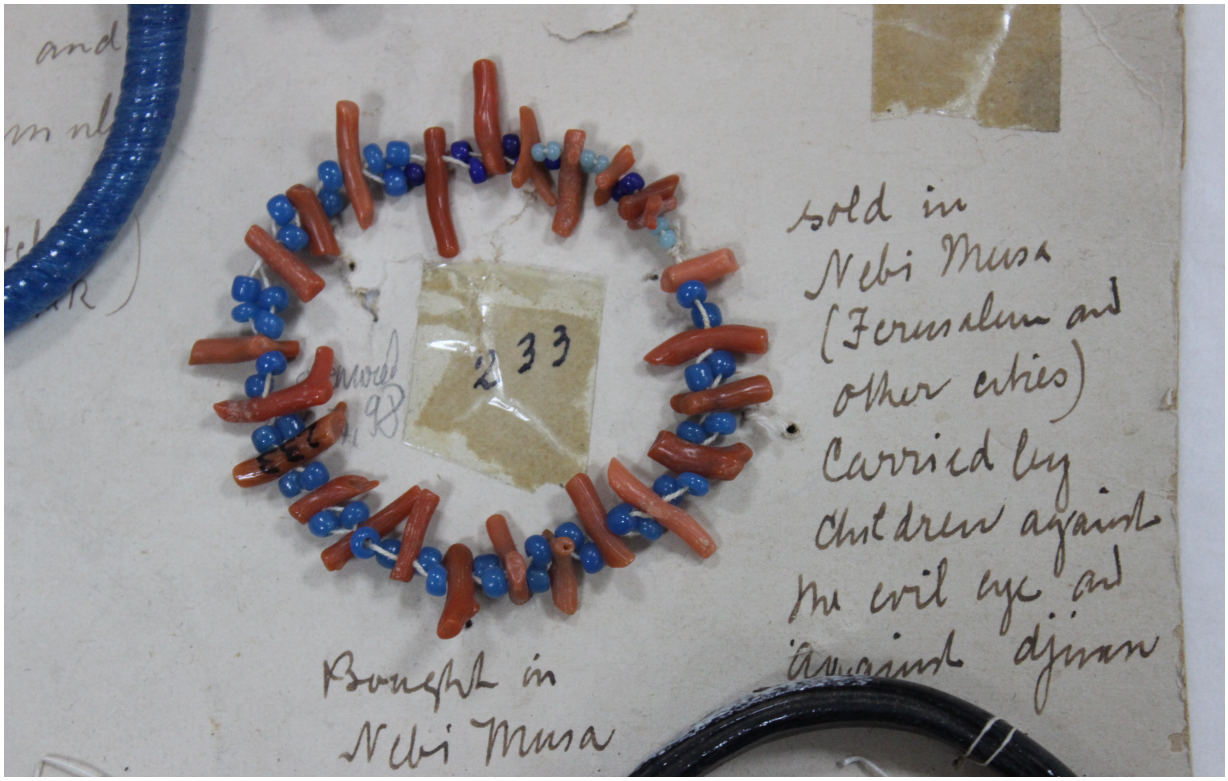


Fig. 20 Bracelet made of coral from the Red Sea. Bedouin manufacture. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. Catalogued no. 233.
Photo taken by the author

where he was supposedly buried. However, in Arabic sources the first mention precedes this date; in fact al-Harawi d.611 after the Hijra /1214 AD mentioned the location of the tomb of Moses near Jericho according to what he had heard from other people who had visited Palestine.[413] Whatever the exact date is, the first mentions of the site appear during the time of the Crusades, and were concerned with the possible destruction of the site by the crusaders. Over the years, hostels were built adjacent to the shrine. By the 17th century when Sheikh Abd al-Ghani al-Nablusi visited Palestine, the site was already important and received a lot of visitors because previous pilgrims had witnessed miracles there. So the importance of the site lay not only in the presence of the prophet's tomb, but in the fact that he was still working miracles.

Although the *maqām* had been visited throughout the centuries, it was in the early 19th century that the Ottoman authorities promoted an organised festive pilgrimage or *mawsim* to the site. This pilgrimage was decided to take place the same week as the Christian celebration of Easter, and was intended to allow people from all parts of Palestine to come together. Nabi Musa became a

[413] K. J. al-'Asali, *Mawsim al-nabī mūsā fī filisṭīn*, Amman: al-Jāmi'a al-Urduniya, 1990

symbolic space for Palestinians to counterbalance the massive number of foreign Christian pilgrims going to Jerusalem and the respective Easter festivities that had been taken over by the missions. In order to allocate the number of pilgrims in Nabi Musa, the Ottomans carried out restoration work in 1820 to enlarge the complex. It is this last restoration of the shrine that to this day includes a complex of domed buildings built around prophet's tomb, a prayer hall, a mosque, and guesthouses for the pilgrims.

During the British Mandate, there was an increase in the number of pilgrims to Nabi Musa particularly during the annual *mawsim,* which had become an official religious celebration, that on closer inspection, served as political event. Emma Aubin Boltanski has analysed how this celebration reaffirmed the social hierarchies and political allegiances, while simultaneously strengthening a Palestinian identity.[414] Religiously and politically speaking, Palestinian authorities positioned prophet Moses as a national saint. The shrine and the *mawsim* were important as a space for pan-Palestinian reunion and for political mobilisation. In Nabi Musa, pilgrims from all parts of Palestine could meet once a year in the annual celebration of prophet. It was a space of confluence where people from different villages and towns. Mainly, but not exclusively, a Muslim celebration, it attracted people from all social classes and religious backgrounds such as adherents of the many *sūfī ṭarīqāt,* sheikhs, practitioners of traditional medicine, etc.

The visits to the shrine and the organisation of the *mawsim* also had economic implications. Adjacent to the shrine, the market was an important commercial spot. Given the fact that this place was where inhabitants from all over Palestine met, material goods manufactured, exchanged, sold and bought were many and diverse. Pilgrims and traders together were responsible for the circulation of goods. There was an influx of objects coming in from different regions that would spread again out all over Palestine and beyond, when pilgrims returned back home. Traders and sellers possibly also being pilgrims themselves, enjoyed the *baraka* of the site while simultaneously also earned some money.

The result of the affluence of pilgrims from different origins and their religious engagements with the saint, was that the market offered a great diversity of products, among them specialised amulets related to the prophet or the *maqām* itself. For the pilgrims who bought them, some of these amulets possessed the *baraka* of the site, others had to be activated through different ritual

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[414] E. Aubin Boltanski, "Le mawsin de Nabī Mūsā: processions, espace en miettes et mémoire blessée. Territoires palestiniens (1998-2000)" in *Les pèlerinages au Maghreb et au Moyen-Orient* edit. Sylvia Chiffoleaus & Anna Madoeuf, Presses de l'Ifpo, p.59-80

procedures, such as placing them in contact with the tomb.[415] Based on the evidence provided by Canaan, amulets sold in Nabi Musa were of two types. On the one hand, there were amulets connected to the story and miracles of Prophet Moses, which were made with *ḥajar mūsā* (Moses stone), a kind of stone obtained from the surrounding areas of the *maqām,* already analysed in Chapter 2. On the other hand, there were amulets that came from other places such as the Red Sea and the Negev Desert. Made of materials not related to the abode of the prophet, they were available there since they were known to be efficacious amulets. Many of them were manufactured by the Bedouins of the Negev, who used them as part of their ways of protection and healing. Their amulets seem to have been popular among inhabitants of Palestine. Objects of bedouin manufacture were bracelets, necklaces, and amulet pouches and contained red coral, cowrie shells and blue beads. (See figure 20) A feature of the Bedouin amulets is the use of tiny beads (of many colours), pierced and set in long threads that were knotted creating a sort of fabric used to make amulets cases.[416] Most of the times these cases contained paper amulets, but Canaan also collected a few items that contained triangular pieces of alum instead. The fact that these amulet cases with written amulets inside were sold in Nabi Musa, points to the fact that they might have been related to Prophet Moses. In Canaan's notes there is no mention of whom could have been responsible for writing these amulets, but it seems probable that they were written *in situ* to be blessed and carried right away.

At Nabi Musa, pilgrims not only bought, but might have used the opportunity to sell or exchange old amulets or precious objects. Pilgrims and merchants would sell to travellers and collectors, like Taufiq Canaan. All these kinds of amulets available at Nabi Musa were traded the year around, but especially during the *mawsim*. In his diaries, Canaan informs us of his visits to Nabi Musa in 1912, 1914 and 1930. The first two times coincide with the period when he worked in the Jericho area. Being an itinerant doctor, he had the chance to visit the shrine. His third visit occurred in very different circumstances; Canaan mentions in his memoirs that he visited the site during the *mawsim* looking for the support of the Grand Mufti Hajj Amin al-Hussaini in the organisation of the International Congress of the YMCA Associations in Jerusalem. This visit to Nabi Musa can be framed within Canaan's political activities and networking as honorary member

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[415] Information about how objects were loaded with *baraka* in Nabi Musa come from an interview with the custodian of the shrine, carried out in October 2015.

[416] Amulet no. 428, 429, 430, 2055

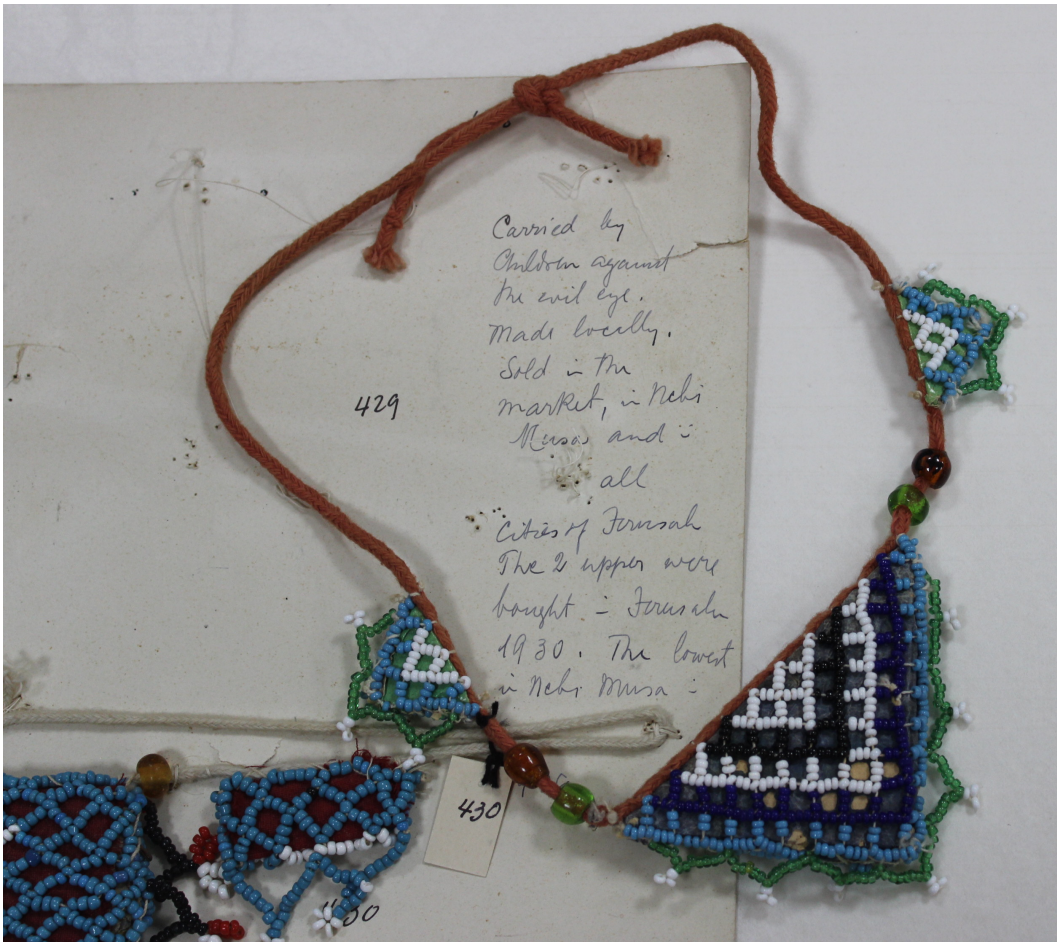


Figure 21. Paper amulet in amulet case. Sold in Jerusalem and Nabi Musa. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

of the YMCA.[417] It is not clear whether Canaan visited the site more to carry out fieldwork and obtain amulets, in any case, many observations and comments about the *maqām* and *mawsim* were recorded in his writings, as well as the important number of objects in his Collection that come from this site.

4.4.3 The antiquarians

The world of antiques and antiquarians is a unique aspect of commoditisation, in which objects acquire value based on the conceptualisation of the old or the ancient. Considering particular objects as antiquities depends on how the past is conceptualised and with it, the categories of old and ancient. Granting this kind of value to objects affects their price and availability. Since antiques are *per se* valuable objects, their circulation responds to the desire of acquiring them either for the pure pleasure and curiosity, as an investment, or to include them in a collection. Circulation of

[417] T. Canaan, *The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs*, Part 2, Jerusalem Quarterly 75, p.138

antiques occurs in networks that involve scholars, government officials, artists, photographers, collectors, and tourism providers, among others.[418]

The trade of antiques in the Levant is documented since the late 19th century in Ottoman official documents, in the accounts of European travellers and by indigenous Arab authors, although these latter ones have not been considered much.[419] These objects originated mostly from the archaeological excavations that had been taking place in the Levant since the late Ottoman period. Despite the fact that foreign archaeological work was restricted before British rule, excavations were carried out under the supervision of the Ottoman administration. Illegal excavations took place as well resulting in looting by the foreigners and locals. As a result, lots of objects circulated as antiques legally and illegally before the establishment of the Mandate government. In this business antiquarians played an important role.

One interesting source that mentioned this business is the *Qāmūs al-ṣanā'āt al-shāmiyya* written by Muhammad Said al-Qasimi (d.1900) and his eldest son Jamal al-Din al-Qasimīi (d.1914).[420] Written in Damascus between 1890 and 1905, it contains a description of the items sold in the Vilayet Syria by antique dealers during the last years of the Ottoman period. In it the profession of the antiquarian or *antikjī* is mentioned for the first time in an Arabic source, and it is defined as someone who sells '*al-athār al-qadīma'* or antiquities.[421] It also mentions that this profession originated from the desire of '*al-faranj'* (refering to foreigners) to buy such '*athār'*. By the time the *Qāmūs* was written, the profession of *antikjī* was widespread due to the strong marketability of the objects sold by them. What the *Qāmūs* refers to as *athār,* ranged from buildings to objects of different kinds, like rugs, clothes, tiles, metalwork, swords, or arms, either complete objects or just pieces of them. These antiquities were considered quite valuable by some local inhabitants, because they were old and belonged to different periods of the history of the region, part of their collective memory. For Western foreigners, they were valuable in terms of classical or general history, and because some of these antiques were part of an exotic oriental world. Although the *Qāmūs* traced the origins of the antiquities trade back to foreign demand, it is important to

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418 A. Thornton, *Tents, Tours and Treks*…., p. 3

419 M. Milwright. "An Arabic description of the activities of antique dealers", p.8

420 Muhammad Sa'īd al-Qasimī and Jamal al-al-Dīn al-Qasimī. Cfr. M. Milwright, "An Arabic Description of the Activities of Antique Dealers in Late Ottoman Damascus", p.9

421 *Qāmūs al-ṣanā'āt al-shāmiyah.* Cfr. Milwright, An Arabic Description oft he Activities of Antique Dealers, p.10

mention that locals were also clients of these kind of goods, which were available at the *antikjī* shops to supply desired objects on demand to all kinds of clientele.

Although the *Qāmūs* revolves around Damascene dealers and the types of objects that they acquired and sold, it mentions that their trade was not limited to Syria. Jerusalem was one of the main cities where these antique dealers found clients, some of whom were also dealers sacred souvenirs and antiquities related to the holy sites. The presence of this kind of trade in the 19th century, responded to the historical and religious significance of the city which had led to *en masse* pilgrimages and to archeological excavations, from which many antique traders got their products.

The proliferation of the antiques business came with the investment in archaeology in Jerusalem and the Holy Land during the Mandate, when the British authorities took the control of the archaeological excavations and the flux of objects coming from them. Amara Thornton points that the regulation of archaeological work in the Levant was as a measure to protect from vandalism the archaeological sites that were considered heritage sites.[422] However, this regulation that explicitly targeted the circulation of objects on the black market, re-directed the circulation of objects to different networks, that of the museums and private collectors.

The more the regulations, the more attractive the business became. Control over the circulation of archaeological remains had to be imposed to try to reduce their circulation in illegal networks. These kinds of objects became exposed to different publics leading to raising interests in acquiring them. It was through organised guided tours and through the visit to the newly founded museums in Palestine that visitors became acquainted with the material culture. A similar effect resulted from the exhibitions of archaeological remains in London, which was a key mechanism in promoting archaeological work in the Middle East to potential collectors. These exhibitions and their corresponding catalogues, with detailed information about the objects, were the means through which wealthy amateur collectors got involved in the market. Some of the people who fuelled the archaeological trade got involved by funding exhibitions or research such as Mr. Henry Mond, who sponsored the research in Petra where Canaan was hired in 1929[423], others got involved just by purchasing objects for their own collections such as Mr. Wellcome, who collected medical artefacts, as discussed in Chapter 5. The demand for certain objects in London coincided with seasonal excavations and exhibitions, when objects were brought in from Palestine to be presented to a

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[422] Thornton, Amara. "Tents, Tours and Treks: Archaeologists, Antiquities Services, and Tourism in Mandate Palestine and Transjordan." *Public Archaeology* 11, no. 4 (2012):195-216.

[423] Canaan, T. *Studies in the Topography and Folklore of Petra*. Jerusalem: Beyt-Ul-Makdes Press 1930

foreign public. The demand of Palestine's antiquities abroad was a way through which locals became acquainted with their value in the market.

The particularity of Jerusalem and its holy sites led local antique dealers, operating in the city, to offer also unique kinds of *athār*. *Antikjī* seem to have adapted to the local markets where clients demanded particular objects. In Jerusalem, despite the common understanding of the *athār*, goods worthy to be collected differed from group to group. There were local pilgrims who visited the holy sites, a*l-faranj* including tourists, pilgrims, and later on members of the missions, who settled permanently in Palestine, and Palestinians with close ties to the missions that developed collecting practices.

With all these different groups in mind, antique dealers included not only archaeological remains or ancient objects from Islamic or earlier periods, but also objects coming from pilgrimage sites that could be acquired as souvenirs. Pilgrimage sites as holy sites were connected to the primordial time — in Mircea Eliade's words[424]— and objects coming from there obtained a value of antiquity through their association to particular events and holy persons. Objects coming from these sites were not necessarily old in years, as archaeological remains, but they acquired the antique value because they were connected to a religious past. Moreover, since antique dealers targeted tourists who were visiting Jerusalem mainly as pilgrims, they had to diversify their merchandise, and what better way to do that, than to include objects that had become fashionable and in demand.

4.4.3.1 Ohan the Armenian antiquarian and collector

In his introductory study to the catalogue of the Tawfik Canaan Collection, Khaled Nashef mentions the names of three antiquarians from whom Canaan reported having acquired some of the amulets: Mr. Ohan, Klayn, and Muhammad Ali.[425] From among them, Canaan seems to have established a good relation with Ohan, an Armenian antiquarian who had a shop in Jerusalem. Canaan purchased many objects from him; the first time was in 1940 and in subsequent years Canaan bought more amulets.[426] It is not clear if Ohan had just opened his shop that year, since there are no previous mentions of him. However, it might be the case because by 1940 Canaan had already been collecting for three decades, and became acquainted with the amulets market. Ohan was much

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[424] M. Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*, p.23

[425] Nashef, Khaled, trans. *Majmū'a tawfīq kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kan'ān*. Birzeit University. Unpublished.

[426] For the description of all amulets bought at Ohan's shop, see Table 3 in Appendix B

younger than Canaan. He is mentioned in later sources by Ms. Widad Kawar, another collector of Palestinian objects, mainly jewellery and dresses. Referring to him as Ohan, Ms. Kawar mentions that he was a jeweller who had assembled a collection of amulets in Jerusalem.[427] The fact that Ohan formed a collection himself as well is very interesting. It shows that as a merchant he got also interested in acquiring objects himself. Knowing that he had met Canaan and probably other collectors raises the question to what extent Ohan as a local merchant could have found inspiration from them to form his own collection. What kinds of amulets were included in his collection? And how did the relation with collectors of similar objects affect the value of the objects for sale in his shop? The objects that Ohan sold were mainly pieces of jewellery. The amulets Canaan got from him were arm amulets made of copper, a kind of jewellery that was used as a protective amulet. Jewellery was frequently sold in antique shops, and some of the pieces could be used as amulets. The fact that they were small, easy to carry and made of fancy materials like silver, precious and semi precious stones must have attracted the attention of collectors. But another attractive feature must have been the inscriptions engraved in some items such as the magical text of Figure 20.



Figure 22. Arm amulet made of copper.
Bought in Ohan's shop in 1940 for 350 mils.
Photo credit: Birzeit University Museum

[427] Kawar, W. *Threads of Identity*, p.57

As for the objects in Ohan's private collection, we know that it included magic bowls. In 1936 Taufiq Canaan published *Arabic Magic Bowls*[428] where he analysed the contents of a big selection of magic bowls including a few from his own collection and also from Ohan's and Lydia Einsler's. Although the selection was representative of the major collectors of magic bowls in Palestine, Canaan's notes do not give the exact number of items comprised in each. Canaan's references to these two collectors and the fact that he documented their bowls, show how close he was to them in terms of exchanging, studying and collecting amulets.[429] It might have been these kinds of research collaborations that inspired Ohan to acquire collectibles for himself.

In Jerusalem, antiquarians seem to have diversified their inventory by including souvenirs from holy places. Canaan recorded having bought from Muhammad Ali, also an antiquities dealer, a *masbaha* (rosary) from Mecca (no. 846) and a written amulet (no. 935). Thus, although in principle antiquarians specialised in old objects coming from archaeological sites, in Jerusalem they sought



Figure 23. Arm amulet with inscribed stones.
Bought in Ohan's shop in 1940 for 500 mils.
Photo credit: Birzeit University Museum

[428]Canaan, Tawfiq. "Arabic Magic Bowls" in JPOS XVI (1936) pp. 104-110

[429] Description of Ohan's bowls. Cfr. Canaan, Tawfiq. "Arabic Magic Bowls" in JPOS XVI (1936) pp. 104-110

the opportunity to open up to the new kinds of clients. Among these new clients were the collectors such as Canaan, who in contrast to local and foreign pilgrims, bought particular objects for their folkloric value.

4.5 Amulets in lieu of payment

An interesting aspect of the commoditisation of amulets can be seen in Canaan's collecting process. As we have mentioned, especially during the first years of his collecting activity Canaan accepted and requested amulets as a means to pay for his medical services, a kind of service that did not exist before in Palestine. So what we witness here is that —for the first time— amulets were exchanged for their ethnographic value. So even though amulets circulated as commodities long before they became object of ethnographic interest, in Canaan's collecting activity we see the mechanism at work where an amulet as an object aimed to heal/protect changes into an amulet as an object with ethnographic value, passing through a phase of an amulet as a means of payment.

Canaan obtained the amulets in this way mostly in the decade of the 1910's. This phase of collecting began in 1910 when he was appointed head of the Polyclinic of the Municipality of Jerusalem and of the Laboratories of the Sinai Front, a job that allowed him to explore the Palestinian hinterland, the Negev Desert, the Sinai Peninsula and Transjordan. From 1910 to 1919 he worked as an itinerant doctor offering low cost medical services to peasants and bedouins. During his medical visits, Canaan noticed that patients used "trinkets" as remedies to illnesses believed to have originated with *jinn-s* and the evil eye. These objects ranged from stones, twigs, to pendants and jewellery, which had been used in traditional medicine for centuries as analysed in Chapter 2. For Canaan, a representative of a "modern" western medical practice, these beliefs and practices were backwards and resulting from ignorance towards the real causes of illness, but valuable to record since they could be analysed within the logic of medical practices. Seeing the poverty of most of his patients, he charged very low fees and in many cases offered his patients to pay in kind.

> "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 his 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."[430]

The exchange of amulets for medical service did not occur all the time. Canaan established diverse relations with his patients. In some cases, he encountered patients only once. In a one-time-only medical visit, he would get to know the patients and prescribe them the intake of a specific kind of medication that he would provide. In other cases, Canaan paid regular visits to particular villages where he encountered patients to whom he would prescribe medication and follow up in a long treatment. The relation with some patients must have become closer as the treatments were longer and required several medical consultations.

Out of these regular visits, Canaan became acquainted with particular cases. Patients who had been following a treatment were more open to give Canaan information about their state of being and their feeling about it. This intimate relation that he established with his patients led Canaan to inquire about the provenance and use of their amulets, as well as to express his willingness to acquire them. It is not explicit in the sources whether the idea of using the amulets as a means of payment came from Canaan or from the patients.

Canaan's offer to obtain their amulets may have provoked different responses. Since patients used amulets as part of a treatment, it was unthinkable to get rid of them while in the treatment. So even when Canaan offered alternative medication, patients kept using their amulets. It was only at the end of the treatment, when they recovered or felt better, that some patients decided to give their amulets away since they were no longer needed. Some patients might have opted to stop using the prescribed amulet and began the treatment suggested by Canaan; however, this scenario does not seem very plausible since modern medicine had difficulties finding its way.[431] Moreover, the presence of replicas in the collection of Canaan further supports the idea that people were attached to their amulets and wished to hold on to them.

The availability of Canaan's medical services were part of institutional and individual efforts to reduce cases of illnesses in Palestine. The fact that these reached some parts of the population was not enough to replace traditional forms of medicine that had prevailed for centuries. However, patients who used Canaan's medical services believed that this kind of modern medicine

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[430] Canaan, Yasma. *Some Biographical Notes on Dr. T. Canaan, Society and Heritage* (al-Bire) 15, 147-152. Cfr. Merschen, B. & U. Hubner, Op. Cit., p.255

[431] Bourmaud, Philippe., *«Ya Doktor»: Devenir médecin et exercer son art en «Terre sainte», une expérience du pluralisme médical dans l'Empire ottoman finissant (1871-1918)*

was worth a try and paid for it. To what extent patients believed in the efficacy of Canaan's medication is very difficult to assess.

Many of the amulets that Canaan got in lieu of payment were not the actual amulets used by the patients. They were replicas. Canaan reports that in some cases patients were not willing to give their amulets away, which points to the value they had for them in medical treatments especially when they had proven to work as these patients were cured from whatever ailment they had suffered from. However, since Canaan had raised the possibility of them being used as a means of payment, patients were willing to collaborate or felt the need to come up with an alternative since they could not afford paying him otherwise. If the patient wanted to keep the amulet, he/she could also offer a replica to the doctor. The idea of replication might have come from Canaan or from the patients themselves, but this is not recorded at all. On the one hand, the necessity to pay Canaan's services might have pushed patients to be creative, on the other hand, Canaan's goal in acquiring these amulets was to have samples of amulets used among his clients so the acquiring the original might not have been important. In any case, the creation of replicas of amulets display a very interesting outcome of the engagement between Canaan and the patients, where negotiation and flexibility played an important role in the commoditisation of amulets.

Since to replicate is to make an exact copy of something, a replica must have the physical qualities of the original; the same materials and designs, and the same proportions. But in the case of an amulet, what about the power that informs it? Annabel Wharton's mentions that "a material replica participates more fully in its prototype's uniqueness or authenticity."[432] In this sense we can use her definition for the amulets under scope, meaning that even when these replicas that Canaan got were not meant to be used as amulets, at least for the time being, they retained a latent capacity. The same happened with the original amulets given to Canaan as payment. Since they had already been used, the amulets were no longer active, and when gathered by Canaan they only functioned as part of the collection. Nevertheless, they would at some point become commoditised as amulets again. Canaan and the patients recognised this latent capacity giving value to the objects based on their original healing and protective use.[433]

The idea of replicating an amulet to give it to the collector might have affected the way users related to their amulets. Canaan's request for their amulets might have been an eye opener for

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[432] A. Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem*, p.4

[433] Benjamin, W., *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility*, Cambridge MA: Belknap, 2008

the users, who would realised that the amulets were commercialised not only for healing purposes, but for the sake of forming a collection. It is plausible that after having been in contact with Canaan, and being exposed to a different view towards amulets, patients in rural areas became aware of the value of their amulets in the eyes of a modern physician from the city. As for users of amulets living in towns, they had more contact with this other view on amulets as they could see objects being sold in shops and requested by collectors.

4.6 Donation of amulets

Another group of amulets was neither bought nor obtained in lieu of payment, but given to Taufiq Canaan as gifts. These amulets are not many but they are significant inasmuch as they come from individuals who were interested in contributing to Canaan's collection. In contrast to the rest of the objects that were chosen by Canaan, these donations came to him from acquaintances who knew about his interest and decided what to contribute.

These donations can be framed in what anthropology has studied as the phenomenon of gifts. Gifts can be of two kinds. On the one hand non-monetary gifts, which are the most studied ones since they appear in all kinds of societies, and on the other hand, cash gifts. In this research I only deal with non-monetary gifts, the kinds of gifts that Canaan received. The phenomenon of gifts has got a lot of attention in scholarly debates since Marcel Mauss' essay, *The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. In exploring the relation between persons and things, gift giving is a process in which someone gives something to someone else. This giving seems to bear no intention of getting anything back, but as Mauss says "gifts generate an obligation to reciprocate" because "to make a gift to someone is to make a present of some part of oneself."[434]

Reciprocation comes as a way to balance social relations. According to Prendergast & Stole, that part of oneself displayed in the gift, is in fact the knowledge of the recipient's preferences, which is key in establishing social relations.[435] The more we know about another person, the better the quality and prediction of what to give.[436] A person who shows understanding of the other is more desirable as a friend. Giving away a small part of oneself is to disclose aspects of oneself. In

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[434] Miyazaki, Hirokazu, "Gifts and Exchange" in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edit. Dan Hicks & Mary C. Beaudry, p.250; Cfr. Mauss, M. 1990, p.12

[435] Prendergast, C. & L. Stole, "The non-monetary nature of gifts" in *European Economic Review* 45 (2001) 1793-1810, p.1795

[436] Prendergast, C. & L. Stole, *Op. Cit*., p.1797

many societies this personal presence in gifts turns them into inalienable things, meaning that once they are given, they go out of circulation. This inalienability has similar consequences to Kopytoff's process of singularisation that occurs for instance with sacred objects. In both cases circulation is no longer possible.

Canaan recorded the identity of some of these individuals who donated amulets. The donors came from different social backgrounds, some came from well-known families of notables, were religious authorities or active in the political life of the country, others had a simple background and fulfilled no prominent role in society; some were of local fame, others were regular people that Canaan happened to be acquainted with or with whom he engaged at some point of his life. As analysed previously, Taufiq Canaan moved in different networks as a physician, ethnographer, but also played an important role as a member of diverse associations and as an academic figure and political activist.

In exploring the kind of gifts that Canaan got and their circulation in the act of giving and receiving, we can understand the motivations behind his acquaintances' contributions. Some of these individuals donated their own amulets, or valuable objects that had been used as amulets by old relatives. Others, amulet makers, made amulets exclusively for his collection. All these acts of giving show on the one hand how well-known Taufiq Canaan's ethnographic work and collecting activity were, and on the other hand, the donors' intention to become part of it. The donations also display the understanding that people had of "amulets" as part of Palestine's folklore, and show how the study of folklore had acquired a certain status, and was considered valuable.

Some of the donors came from al-Ansari family such as Shaykh Yahya al-Danaf al-Ansari and Shaykh Ibrahim Hassan al-Danaf al-Ansari, *qayim bāshā masjid al-aqṣā wa qubbat al-ṣakhrā.* As keepers of *al-ḥaram al-sharīf,* they were involved in the manufacture and distribution of objects related to the holy site, and as explored before, they were responsible for the issuing of pilgrimage certificates. Two pilgrimage certificates no. 942 and no. 943 were given to Canaan as gifts. The fact that religious authorities gave Canaan samples of pilgrimage certificates and others documents to be part of his collection of amulets is very interesting. It raises the question of how aware they were of the nature of Canaan's collection, but also of how Canaan framed his collecting activity and the objects he gathered. Did he describe them as medical objects, religious objects, magical objects, or ethnographic evidence? What understanding did these authorities have of an "amulet" that led them to collaborate by giving a pilgrimage certificate? I argue that since Canaan was very faithful to the scientificity of his research and his comparisons of the healing and protective uses of amulets with

biomedical treatments, he must have described his collecting activity in the same terms. Therefore, the donors, aware of the use of these pilgrimage certificates as protective objects, gave to Canaan some amulets.

Next to religious authorities responsible for the holy sites, other donors were also religious authorities of local fame. Sheikh Atif from the *ṭarīqat al-qādiriyya* gave Canaan three items in 1914: 886, 889, 897. They are paper amulets written by him and folded in a triangular shape. The first one was against miscarriage, the second was to lower or cease fever, and the third was to obtain "anything" (*li-l-ḥuṣūl 'alā kull shay'*), must have been just samples of the variety of amulets that the Sheikh prepared.[437] Another amulet maker was Sheikh Najib al-Nubani, from a family famous for practicing traditional medicine. Located in *Wādī al-Jūz,* a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, he prepared amulets of different kinds. In 1914 he prepared, exclusively for Canaan, two amulets against *jinn* (no. 283, 284). These were not the first ones; in his notes we know that by that time, Canaan had already got other amulets from his clients manufactured by the Sheikh. All these amulets, no. 835, 836, 1053, 1054, and 1055, were sheep shoulder blades with inscriptions aimed to cure different illnesses. The fact that Canaan had acquired a few amulets made by the Sheikh, it must have been interesting for him to get samples directly from him. It is not clear to what extent Canaan had contact with the Sheikh, but both were located in Jerusalem and were medical practitioners. I assume that the two amulets that Canaan got directly from him were made exclusively to be added to his collection since Canaan did not believe in jinns and did not ask for the services of the Sheikh to get a remedy for himself. What is not clear is whether Canaan asked for these specific kinds of amulets or if the Sheikh chose what to prepare. In any case, the presence of the Sheikh's name in Canaan's collection is quite important because he was one of the most representatives of the medical tradition that Canaan was trying to record. The addition of amulets in the Collection made by such famous amulet makers, gave these objects a singular status that prevented them from becoming commoditised.

Other donors to Canaan's collection came from well-known families such as al-Husaini,[438] al-Nammari, al-Nashashibi, and from the urban bourgeoisie of Jerusalem. Surnames such as al-Mamluk, Qlibu or Klaybo, Hamuda, Jaltini, Hadad, and al-Barghuthi appear in Canaan's notes as

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[437] Cfr. T. Canaan notebooks. Cfr. K. Nashef, Arabic translation and Introduction to Canaan's catalogue.

[438] Musa Kazim (Basha) al-Ḥusaynī (1853-1934) was politically active, held senior posts in the Ottoman administration. Appointed mayor of Jerusalem by the British in 1918 he was dismissed by the British authorities in 1920. He was head of the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Arab Congress from 1922 to 1934

parts of the list of donors of amulets. The network that Canaan established and particular relations with each one are somehow mentioned in his memoirs and biographical works. However, the role these people played in contributing to his Collection still needs more exploration.

4.7 Concluding remarks

The ways Taufiq Canaan obtained the items for his collection point to different processes of commoditisation that accommodated an array of human engagements. Taking place in different networks, the engagements between amulet users, merchants, collectors and ethnographers determined the exchange value of the amulets, as medical remedies, ethnographic data, and collectables. Considering the capacity of amulets of acquiring value to be exchanged for other services, objects, or money adds a deeper understanding of how amulets moved around and went through different phases. This chapter shows different ways whereby objects lose their particular and personal characteristics allowing them to be exchanged. It also explores the networks in which they circulated, the people involved in such circulation and the places where this took place. Focusing on the continuity and the diversity of commoditisation processes we can understand the social context amulets circulated, plus the interactions between Taufiq Canaan and his many interlocutors during his collecting years. Moreover, a focus on the exchange of commodities shows that obtaining amulets as ethnographic data and collectibles, has never been a unidirectional activity where collectors take what they please, rather it is a process in which all parties are active and have the ability to negotiate. Users of amulets, including clients and collectors have to negotiate; they bargain, buy, accept replicas, and exchange rates in order to get what they want. They set new values in the spot where the transaction takes place. Their agency is shown in how they sell, buy, exchange and donate. Moreover, the users of the amulets who get them as part of medical treatment, did not only passively receive amulets made by the sheikh, they were active in finding, activating, passing on, and selling the amulets.

Taufiq Canaan's exchange of his modern medical remedies for traditional remedies points to a process of commoditisation of the "traditional" life in Palestine. It does not mean that prior to Canaan's collecting years, amulets were not circulating as commodities, but Canaan's engagement shows how a generation of travellers/ethnographers and amateur collectors of Palestine's folklore, by engaging with the local population, were effecting the way amulets were understood, used, and commercialised. The exchange value that Canaan gave to his amulets relied on the way folklore was imagined. For urbanites like Canaan and other ethnographers, objects coming from the local

people were worthy to study and collect since they were under threat of disappearing. This same ethnographic value appears to be present in the objects that Canaan obtained as gifts from the sheikhs. How they saw Canaan in his various facets, as a doctor, a folklorist, and a political activist, must have motivated them to become part of his collecting project that after all was becoming more and more politicised.

Now that we have examined the amulets in their phase as commodities we should turn to the most recent phase that formed the *Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*, in which amulets are explored as tokens of the Palestinian national identity.

Chapter 5. Amulets as Palestine's cultural heritage.

> "Collections construct identity, not just that of the social group whose reality is interpreted through the objects on display, but also that of the collection's authors. Collections also fashion the identity of their audiences, who interpret according to their own discourses and desires the stories that the objects tell." [439]

5.1 Outline

The T.C.C.P.A. as it appears in 1995 stands as the starting point of my attempt to peel off the different layers of meaning added to this collection. Its naming and later on its first exhibition in 1998 was informed with ideas of national belonging and pride, and expressed the socio-political and ideological background of the 1990s. Although the first exhibition *Ya Kafi Ya Shafi* addressed Canaan's scientific motivations as a physician in acquiring the objects, the way it was framed was entirely determined by contemporary ideas about exhibiting material culture. These ideas were based on practices that had developed alongside the revival of Palestine's folklore since the 70's.[440]

This chapter revolves around the conceptualisation of the Canaan objects as Palestinian amulets. Starting with the Collection's arrival at BZU, I will peel off the layers of meaning added in the years since its inception through the collecting activities of Taufiq Canaan (analysed in Chapter 3) and his work on the collection as a collector-cum-ethnographer. I begin by analysing the process of naming the collection and how the amulets were addressed in the first exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi*. Based on my correspondence with members of the exhibition committee, as well as by analysing the catalogue and reports and reviews of the exhibition, this chapter explores the message this exhibition aimed to convey. The chapter then moves on to how amulets have been catalogued and approached after the exhibition. Since these approaches have referred continually to the time of the Collection's formation, the second part of the chapter aims to trace how Taufiq Canaan approached the amulets as Palestine's material culture. This second part aims to show that the Palestinian identity of the objects is not merely a product of the 1990s but is based on Canaan's own experience. Since the chapter also touches upon how the formation of national identity is intimately

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[439] S. Mejcher-Atassi & J.P. Schwartz, edit. *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, p.2

[440] Collecting material culture came hand by hand with the folklorist revival of the 70's and 80's, which stressed the specificity of Palestinian traditions and culture. Cfr. V. Tamari. Op. Cit. p.39

connected with collecting, displaying and exhibiting material culture of the past, it also includes Taufiq Canaan's political views and considerations on the Palestinian-ness of the material he collected. This second part analyses the development of Canaan's collecting process in the light of the political events and their effect on identity formation as well as the engagement with Palestine's material culture.

5.2 Canaan's amulets arrive to Birzeit University

In 1995 Ms. Leila Canaan Mantoura, Yesma Styring and Nada Batten[441] donated to BZU 1380 small objects that had been collected by their father Taufiq Canaan in the early 20th century. The aim of this donation was to give it to an academic institution where this could be kept, studied and exhibited as part of the remnants of the material cultural heritage of Palestine that had survived years of war and Israeli occupation.

The fact that the daughters of Taufiq chose to donate this collection to BZU deserves further attention. Established in 1924 as a girls school and evolving over the years to become the first university in Palestine in the 1970's, BZU is the result of perseverance, resistance and adaptation to the political situation. It has played a key role in Palestinian educational, social, cultural and political life and the university community could be considered a "microcosm of the Palestinian people."[442] According to Salim Tamari, it has provided space for political activism as well as for interaction among men and women away from the repressive social conventions, setting a fora for intellectual debates and an arena for organised students' activity at a national level.[443] Thus, choosing BZU as the final destination for this important collection, shows that Canaan's daughters felt this collection fitted that atmosphere.

Baha Jubeh recalls how the transfer of the Canaan amulets took place in 1995.[444] In a very discreet way, the objects were taken out of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) premises in West Jerusalem where they had been kept since the occupation of Jerusalem in 1948. The objects were put in boxes, in the trunk of Leila Canaan Mantoura's car, and taken to the West

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441 V. Tamari, "Tawfik Canaan - Collectioneur par excellence: The Story Behind the Palestinian Amulet Collection at Birzeit University" in *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, edited by Sonja Mejcher-Atassi and John Pedro Schwartz, 71-90. England: Ashgate, 2012.

442 I. Audeh. (Ed.) *Birzeit University: The Story of a National Institution*. p.89

443 I. Audeh. (Ed.) *Birzeit University: The Story of a National Institution*. p.21

444 Personal communication with B. Jubeh during my fieldwork in the Autumn of 2015

Bank. This operation was very risky because the flux of people and goods between Jerusalem and the West Bank was under surveillance and control. The donation took place thanks to the relation of Leila Canaan Mantoura with Vera Tamari, Tania Tamari and Hanna Nasser, scholars affiliated to BZU.[445] The 1380 amulets plus 250 icons —icons that have not been studied yet, were the only belongings that Taufiq Canaan and his wife Margot Eilander managed to take with them after the occupation of Jerusalem in 1948, when they were forced to leave their home in al-Musrarah Quarter. The rest of their possessions, including the priceless library, and many manuscripts were ransacked and then burnt.[446]

> "As our house was in the firing zone, we decided to move. The Greek Orthodox Convent gave us one furnished room. We carried a few things from home, hoping that we could soon return back. But our house was completely lost with all our furniture, my beloved library and several unpublished articles." [447]

In 1948 with the total occupation of the Palestinian coastal cities and West Jerusalem by the Israeli military, residents were forced to abandon their houses and migrate to East Jerusalem, the West Bank, Transjordan, Gaza Strip and Lebanon. An immense number of valuable objects, such as films, photographs and audio recordings that had been left in these homes, were appropriated by the Israeli Defence Forces eventually ending up in their archives.[448] Although most of this looted material has been kept as restricted and is not available to the Palestinian public, a few Palestinian researchers have been granted access to Israeli archives where they —in some cases— have found private documents that belonged to their own families.[449]

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[445] Details about the donation of the Collection to BU were obtained in private email correspondence between Baha Jubeh and the author of this research.

[446] K. Nashef. "Tawfik Canaan: His Life and Works." Translated by Khalil Sleibi. *Majallat ad-Dirasat al-Filastiniya* 50 (2002): 69-91., p.24

[447] T. Canaan, "The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs. Part 2" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 75, p. 140

[448] The study and publication of an important part of these archives has been done by the Israeli scholar Rona Sela. Cfr. Ofer Aderet, Why Are Countless Palestinian Photos and Films Buried in Israeli Archives? Haaretz July 01, 2017.

[449] Private conversation with Baha Jubeh; See also *Looted and Hidden* a film by Rona Sela that describes the looting of Palestinian belongings by the IDF; *The Great Book Robbery* a film by Benny Brunner.

Taufiq Canaan, from among these displaced Palestinians, managed to afford protection to some of his belongings due to the network he had built over the years. As a member of the YMCA since its foundation in Jerusalem in 1912, he was granted some protection and got the chance to keep his collection of amulets and icons in the Jerusalem building many years. During these years, research on Palestine's culture and history developed; in the 1970's scholars working on folklore, magic, amulets, etc. became acquainted with Canaan's written work but never with the material he collected.

After having remained hidden for almost 50 years the Collection only surfaced in 1995, after Canaan's daughters had accomplished a successful move to BZU. This time the move was to a safe place where the collection could be studied and displayed openly. By that time, only one year had passed since the ratification of the 1994 Oslo Accords, an event that granted some political stability through the international recognition of a Palestinian National Authority. Considering this relative stability, Canaan's family might have felt that this was a good moment to take the collection to the West Bank.

When the daughters of Taufiq Canaan donated the collection, they and the Founding Committee for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage at BZU with Vera Tamari as the chairperson, decided to name it *The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets* in Arabic *majmū'a tawfīq kan'ān li l-ḥujub*. The naming of the collection is precisely the starting point of this chapter. It discloses the way the objects were conceptualised at a very particular moment in the history of Palestine, namely the years that followed the Oslo Accords and the formation and recognition of the Palestinian Authority. It is within this socio-political context that the story of the Canaan amulets began to be narrated within a framework of nationalist sentiment. The name of the T.C.C.P.A., as we know it today, gives the false impression that it was conceived from the beginning as a collection of Palestinian heritage intended for public display; this idea comes from how its story has been narrated, mainly focusing on the collection as a whole. However, as argued before, if the attention is shifted to the Collection as a process and to the amulets as objects that have a life and agency, then the plot would not only begin in the early 20th century when Canaan acquired the first items, it would probably begin even earlier because many of the amulets had been in use for a long time prior to them having been collected. The story then would extend to the year 1948 when Canaan had to pack his collection and hide it, continue in 1995 when it was made public, and so on until the last time the collection, or some items of it were exhibited. It would have to include the stories about it from 1948 to 1995, initially told by Canaan in some of his articles where he referred

to his amulets, and rephrased by scholars after him referring to his work. Keeping the collection at the premises of YMCA might have been a tough decision since we know that Canaan kept working on his medical and ethnographic research until his death in 1964. Evidence of this are all the articles he wrote after 1948.[450] Thus, two processes were central to the formation of the T.C.C.P.A., collection formation and its Palestinisation which can be traced from the time Taufiq Canaan started to collect until the donation and naming in 1995.

5.3 Establishing the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets at Birzeit University

The T.C.C.P.A. was established in 1995 after its donation to BZU. This is not to say that the Collection did not exist before, it was created by Canaan but it was neither conceived as a collection of Palestinian heritage nor aimed to be exhibited as such even though Canaan's thoughts about this, evolved. To acknowledge the involvement of Canaan's daughters and BZU's staff in the naming and establishment of the Collection does not deny Canaan's collecting process in the shaping of the Collection, but it highlights the different moments in the conceptualisation of the amulets and the Collection as Palestinian heritage.

The naming of the objects as a "collection of Palestinian amulets" allows us to reflect on two issues. On the one hand it gives the idea that the collection was devised from the beginning as a single entity, meaning that it was the expected result of a project. The collecting process of Canaan, however, went through different stages, in some of them he did not even foresee the amulets as a collection. (A more detailed discussion about the stages of Canaan's collecting process is found in Chapter 3.) When we approach a collection not as a result, but as a dynamic creative process and the objects in it as coming from different settings, we must differentiate the objects themselves coming with their own stories from the collection as a narrative that uses the objects to construct itself. Paying attention to individual objects in a collection and the stories they bring with them such as the way they circulated and were used, helps us to deconstruct this imposed Palestinian identity, and to understand better the Palestinian identity in time and space.

The second issue to reflect on is that the naming of the collection in 1995 was based on a particular understanding of the present and a particular configuration of the past. Three moments in the development of the political situation explain this articulation, they are analysed in depth in section 5.5. The label "Palestinian" was deliberately chosen to describe the collection as a whole despite the fact that many of the objects in it were not manufactured in Palestine or by Palestinians,

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[450] The complete list of Canaan's works is available in the Bibliography of this thesis.

and in a few cases they were not even used in Palestine. Examples of the first case are those amulets manufactured in Amman, Damascus, Aleppo, Beirut, as well as a few from Egypt, Mecca, Yemen, Iran and Germany that belonged to individuals (Palestinians and non-Palestinian), some of whom had travelled and acquired them abroad. Despite their origin, these amulets eventually made their way into Palestine's local medical, magical and religious culture. Examples of amulets that were never used in Palestine is the big group of *phylacteria* acquired in Aleppo, bought by Canaan during his medical stay in Syria. These phylacteries came from a particular Syrian Christian background, and for Canaan it was important to collect them as they were part of religious healing practices. Although they entered Palestine exclusively as collectibles and they were not used as amulets anymore, they were collected as representatives of common practices among Christian communities in the Levant, including Jerusalem and Nazareth, from where other phylacteries originated.

The use of the term Palestinian in labelling a collection of objects from different places and periods, used by members of different communities raises questions about the formation of the Palestinian identity through time and space. Canaan's interest in healing practices led him to collect objects used among different communities, some of them non indigenous who had recently immigrated. Some of them were Jews who had settled and brought with them their own forms of healing and protection. These amulets were indeed part of the socio-cultural landscape of Palestine and for Canaan they served to exemplify the "popular" forms of healing that existed alongside the modern medicine he represented. However, as we turn to the framework of the nationalist political sense of the term Palestinian, these objects should not even be considered part of a collection of Palestinian amulets.

Labelling the objects Palestinian and placing them in the collection overruled the fact that the amulets had their own biographies as objects. If collecting is narrating, then what did Canaan want to narrate as he collected the amulets, and how different is this narrative to the one presented in the first exhibition in the 1990s? Both, the story of the exhibition and the underlying story that Canaan wanted to tell, had an impact on the way the objects were represented.

To label the Canaan objects as Palestinian was a political statement to contest the *de facto* presence of a Palestinian entity but the absence of the Palestinian state. The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and the subsequent Interim Agreement (Oslo II) in 1995 led to the formation of a Palestinian National Authority, providing the first international recognition to the Palestinians. Under that same agreement the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Archaeology was officially

given responsibility for the management, protection and preservation of cultural heritage sites.[451] The foundation of such institutions also brought a status of political liminality that enhanced and evidenced the lack of power over many issues, among them the administration of cultural heritage.[452] The label "Palestinian" seemed to have contested this liminal situation by asserting that Canaan's amulets were part of Palestine's cultural heritage. Moreover, defining the amulets as such tackled at the same time the major narrative of the state of Israel, which since its foundation has opted to neglect the existence of a Palestinian people by not using the term "Palestinian" when referring to the indigenous population simply because it implies recognition of a national group connected to the land. Rather, the Israeli narrative has preferred the term "Arab" because it connects the inhabitants of Palestine with those from other Arab countries "whom they are welcome to go and join".[453]

This self-conscious use of the term Palestinian explicitly for this collection, fitted into the attempt to record, study and document all things Palestinian as a political act. Using the term for objects that dated back to the late Ottoman and Mandate periods was a way to proof the existence of a Palestinian culture that preceded the first national sentiments. Although Rashid Khalidi has located the beginning of Palestinian national sentiments to the period during the years between the outset of World War I to sometime early on in the British Mandate, this feeling of locating Palestine's ancient existence in the land developed much later.[454] In contrast these first forms of national identification that developed within urban upper and middle class groups in the 1930's had to do with the imbalance that the British Mandate had brought in terms of employment and opportunities, granting more benefits to the Jewish population and causing an erosion of the existing way of living and social relations. As prominent members of this social elite, Canaan and many of the donors who collaborated in the formation of his collection, consciously thought of the amulets as belonging to their own Palestinian culture. In Canaan's own experience, the identification of the amulets as representatives of the Palestinian culture came only late in his collecting activity. Prior to WWI, he considered the amulets he collected in the first decade rather as

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[451] S. al-Houdalieh. "The Destruction of Palestinian Archaeological Heritage: Saffa Village as a Model" in *Near Eastern Archeology* 69 (2): 102-112, June 2006

[452] R. Saunders. "Between Paralysis and Practice: Theorizing the Political liminality of Palestinian Cultural Heritage." p.471

[453] R. Kanaaneh. *Birthing the Nation*, p.12

[454] R. Khalidi. *Palestinian Identity*, p.150

part of a folklore that existed in the land but that shared features with practices in the Levant and beyond. His focus was not on Palestinian versus others, but on rural vs town, and on traditional healing vs new forms of medicine. Canaan's suppliers too did not label the objects they were using as Palestinian, they would refer to their origin by mentioning the name of the manufacturer, the market where they had acquired them, the village or town, or the region.

The Palestinian-ness attributed to the objects in the 1990s also derived from the way Taufiq Canaan has been identified. It is true that the Palestinian identity of the author defines aspects of his work, but I argue that the Palestinian character of the objects is based —to some extent— on an overemphasis of Canaan's commitment to his land that is best represented in his political activism and writings of 1936. As part of the narrative of the national culture, Canaan has been portrayed above all as a Palestinian doctor and ethnographer, whose medical and ethnographic research and activities were in tune with his commitment to the land of Palestine and its people. However, seeing Canaan only in this way disregards the critical attitude he had towards the customs of Palestinian peasants and the way he praised the benefits brought by modern Western medicine.[455] Moreover, we should not discard that much of his work and achievements might have aimed at gaining individual recognition as a good doctor, a good anthropologist, and a good scholar. The focus on his Palestinian-ness based only on his commitment to a national project, that indeed happened from 1936 onwards, blurs overlapping identities. Besides being a Palestinian man, Canaan was also a Lutheran, a modern Westernised man, an Ottoman citizen, a native from Beit Jala, a resident of Jerusalem, a doctor committed to Western medical science, and an anthropologist/ ethnographer of the Levant. The overemphasis on his commitment to his nation has also kept out of sight the fact that as a product of his time and place, he was very critical towards his study objects, the *fellaḥīn* and bedouin —at least this is the message he conveyed in some of his articles and speeches.[456] Canaan's writings show that he did not agree with and look down their way of life, especially regarding customs that contradicted his notion of hygiene and the treatment of women.[457] In fact, when he stated that village culture was worthy to be collected, his aim was only to record it but never to keep it alive. This critical attitude raises few questions about his direct engagement with his patients, the sellers of many amulets. If he looked down upon their customs, how did he show

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[455] P. Bourmaud, "A Son of the Country", p.117

[456] P. Bourmaud, *Ibidem*.

[457] Canaan was very critical towards customs regarding children, which discriminated girls. Cfr. T. Canaan, "The Child in the Palestinian Arab Superstition." *JPOS* 7 (1927): 159-186

interest in their products? What was his attitude towards his patients during the medical consultations? Was he condescending or patronising? Did the patients not care?

The Palestinian-ness attributed to the objects also comes from the idea that they are reservoirs of a lost practice and belief system. Canaan's ethnographic work and collecting have been seen as part of a larger project of safeguarding material culture that was undermined by colonisation and urbanisation. However, if we see how everyday religion is practiced, nowadays we can find some of the amulets are still in circulation.[458]

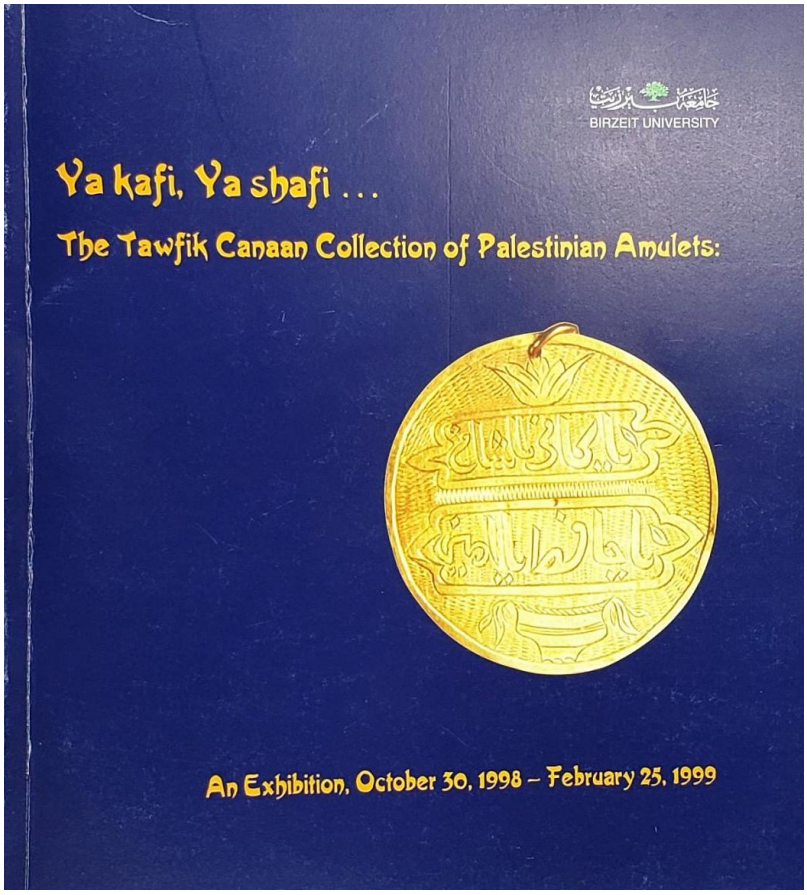


Figure 24. Cover of the catalogue from the exhibition *Ya kafi, Ya shafi…* The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.
Photo taken by the author

5.4 *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi… An exhibition.*

Exhibitions narrate particular stories, construct identities and fashion the identity of the audience. Exhibitions do not necessarily narrate the objects' first stories, neither the collection's original

[458] For contemporary use of amulets in Palestine, see A. Abu Rabia."The Evil Eye and Cultural Beliefs among the Bedouin Tribes of the Negev, Middle East." Folklore 116, no. 3 (2005): 241-254.

story. In exhibitions, objects are extracted from their repository and organised in a particular way; they end up being subsumed under the aim of the exhibition. When BZU organised the first exhibition of the T.C.C.P.A., what story did the curators/organisers want to tell? How was Taufiq Canaan introduced to the Palestinian public of the West Bank --a very different audience from that which saw the Collection in its formation process. What kind of image was there constructed of him and his collection? As with the naming of the collection, we need to ask as well what the social-political situation was that made room for this exhibition.

In 1998, three years after the donation to the BZU, a selection of objects from the Canaan Collection was exhibited under the name *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi… The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*, curated by Gisela Helmeke from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. The exhibition took place from October 30, 1998 to February 25, 1999. By 1998, Helmeke had curated previous exhibitions on Palestine such as *Palästinensische Volkskunst* in 1978, and had published texts about related Palestinian objects in the Museum of Dresden, some of which had been collected by Lydia Einsler for the International Hygiene Exhibition. The name of the exhibition that took place in BZU was coined by Khaled Nashef who at that time occupied the post of Director of the Palestinian Institute of Archeology at BZU. The name came from the inscription of one of the pendants in the Collection made of gold. This item appears on the cover of the catalogue (See Fig. 22). The formulaic expression *yā kāfī yā shāfī* is a way to address God, but also a prophet or a *walī,* and it is used when a person seeks protection and healing. This expression, chosen to name the exhibition showed the interest in addressing the healing and protective qualities of the amulets, aspects that were central in Taufiq Canaan's own approach to the amulets, and that were used by the curator as the main categories to organise the objects in the exhibition. The choice of using such an expression comes from the fact that it appears in other amulets as well, but also because it represents the general attitude that users of amulets had when seeking for the protective and healing power. The contextualisation of such an expression with the only amulet made of gold may also point to the preference most curators had for beautiful precious objects.

According to Vera Tamari, the aim of the exhibition was twofold: "to show to the community of BZU the pride of the rich heritage of the Palestinians, as well as to raise awareness of the need to protect it, promote it, and nurture it."[459] When exploring how the exhibition took place and what kind of audience it targeted, I argue that the exhibition not only presented the objects

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[459] V. Tamari. Personal correspondence

(representatives of the rural culture of the peasantry) as Palestinian heritage, but also chose to stage Taufiq Canaan as a key figure of Palestine's historical patrimony. He was put forward as a repository of scientific knowledge (medicine and folklore), a man full of love and commitment to his country, and one that was well-aware of the loss of his land and the vanishing of his culture. The general message was that, had it not been for Canaan's conscious process of collecting and recording this part of Palestine's cultural heritage, meaning the amulets, would have never been known.

In 1998, in the framework of the 50th anniversary of the Nakba, the exhibition was inaugurated within an atmosphere of commemorating events. Everywhere in Palestine protests were organised to commemorate 50 years of Israeli occupation. In this context, the exhibition of the Canaan Collection was not only presented as a result of pure scientific interest, it also addressed the common topic of the commemorations. Besides presenting a group of amulets as part of traditional medicine, the exhibition placed Taufiq Canaan at the core of the display as a folklorist and researcher.

Folklorists have been recognised in Palestine as key figures in the organisation of the "know-how" around patrimony (*turāth)*.[460] Since the aftermath of 1967 they have been in charge of compiling, analysing and spreading elements of Palestine's folklore. Their work has been central because they have the ability to trigger visual imagination through descriptions of the physical spaces and rituals, mainly contained in folktales and memorial books.[461] They have compiled stories, sayings, and described rituals and spaces. Through their description they inform the reader about landscapes, geography, traditions, etc. They aim to give a visual context so that the reader's visualisation and imagination are triggered. Because Canaan's works are so full of descriptions, they were adopted as ways of triggering these visual images about sanctuaries, rituals around saints, wells, demons, etc. from the pre-Nakba period. He provided a later generation of folklorists with the resources to assert other aspects of Palestinian cultural nationalism.[462] The aim of remembering and creating images of the past is a characteristic of post-Nakba collective memory. Canaan's works have been included in this collective national memory from the 1970's onwards despite the fact that his writings reflect his lived reality not a memorised past. Their authenticity rests on the fact that

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[460] V. Bontemps. *Ville at patrimonie en Palestine. Une etnografie des savonneries de Naplouse.* p.16

[461] R. Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011

[462] P. Bourmaud, "A Son of the Country", p.104

they were produced before the Nakba and already show the preoccupation with the undermining of Palestinian culture. Canaan's works were so attractive because, contrary to post-Nakba folklorists whose aim was to connect their present with the days before the Nakba through their memories, Canaan himself and his descriptions belong to this pre-Nakba period.

Roger Heacock has advanced a triptych scheme for Palestine's heritage that includes elite, popular and official forms of remembering, forgetting and surviving the occupation. These three forms are perhaps not exceptional to the case of Palestine, however, their dynamics in conjunction to the absence of a sovereign Palestinian State is what makes them important to consider.[463] These forms of heritage have resulted from the interactions of different social groups with their own past as well as with a common past of Palestine. These three forms of heritage pertaining to different social groups draw elements from each other and coexist in the absence of a Palestinian State. Following Heacock's model, I would argue that the boundaries between these three forms of heritage are sometimes blurred.

The exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi… The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets* presented a kind of heritage, that according to Heacock's model, came from the popular sphere, meaning that the objects belonged to the everyday life of the *fellaḥīn* and bedouins. However this popular heritage was exhibited/arranged through the eyes of an elite. Taufiq Canaan, a member of the Jerusalemite bourgeoisie, moved in elite circles that included other collectors, ethnographers, religious and political public figures. A second layer of elite culture was added after Canaan's death. His daughters continued to be part of an elite society and as time passed, they were involved in the exhibition that remembered their father. The donation of the Collection and the exhibition that celebrated the memory of their father's had obvious repercussions for Canaan's family own position in Palestinian society. *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi*, was in this sense an exhibition about popular heritage and elite heritage; about Canaan's amulets and Canaan himself, about the pre-Nakba rural culture and about the urban Jerusalemite culture. The curatorial work of this exhibition discloses how a particular group of Palestine's society, i.e., scholars and intellectuals from Ramallah/Birzeit remembered the past and wanted others to remember it. The exhibition had a twofold aim, on the one hand to present Palestine's common past (the amulets and practices attached to them), and on the other hand, the elite's own past through their connection with individual figures, heroes of

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[463] R. Heacock. "The Palestinian Triptych: Official, Elite and Popular Heritage" *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies,* 2012: 14.2, p. 297-311

Palestine's preservation and resistance.[464] In *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* Canaan's work was displayed in a way that was connected with the actual living elite.

5.4.1 Analysis of the Catalogue.. different writings, different tones

The exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* and its corresponding catalogue delineated the first semantic framework of the Canaan objects. It has been mentioned that the Canaan amulets entered BZU as a donation. Important to recall here are the implications of donating or gift giving already explored in Chapter 4. Donating a collection to the University implied something in return, and in this case the recognition of Canaan and his family as contributors to Palestine's cultural heritage. Motivated by the feeling of duty to safeguard part of Palestine's cultural heritage, Canaan's relatives chose this private institution to take care of. The Founding Committee for the Development of Cultural Heritage of BZU was responsible for the acquisition of the collection.[465] All objects in the Collection without distinction were subsumed under the category of Palestinian amulets. Up to this point no overview had been made and no analysis had been done of what the objects in the collection were. Three years later however, the exhibition took place after the analysis of the material and a close reading of Canaan's writings, which helped to understand the amulets in context. With a more accurate knowledge about the amulets, particular objects were chosen to represent on the one hand, the entire collection and Canaan's ethnographic work, and on the other hand, Palestine's folklore. Moreover, as a kind of political statement, the exhibition was planned to inaugurate the Ethnographic and Archaeological Gallery that the University had created to exhibit material culture that was considered Palestine's heritage.

The central place that was granted to the Collection's author, Taufiq Canaan, becomes clear in the catalogue, which stands as the written memory of how the exhibition was conceived and took place. The catalogue comprises sections written by the people involved in the organisation: Hanna Nasir, president of BZU; Vera Tamari, Palestinian visual artist and founding member of the Committee for the Development of Cultural Heritage; Leila Canaan Mantoura, daughter of Taufiq Canaan; Wissam Abdullah, and Gisela Helmeke. The contents and tone of the sections differ and demonstrate how each one of them related to Canaan, and to the objects as part of a Palestinian

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[464] Cfr. R. Heacock. "The Palestinian Triptych: Official, Elite and Popular Heritage" in *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 14:2, 297-311, p.302

[465] Founded in 1997, its members included Vera Tamari, Rema Hammami, Penny Johnson, Nazmi Jubeh and Sharif Kanaaneh

past. However, they all share a sort of nostalgia, prevalent in the Palestinian collective memory about the pre-Nakba period, also called "the days of lost paradise".[466]

Two topics prevail in the catalogue: the amulets as part of Canaan's scientific work and the amulets as part of Palestine's heritage. In the first, Canaan is placed at the centre, and the amulets are seen as a by-product of his scientific research; in the second, the objects are central to the extent that they are seen as remnants of Palestine's rural culture, which has been epitomised as national heritage. While we can detect that both topics are intertwined, it is possible to distinguish two different approaches to Canaan and his amulets; on the one hand a scientific approach to the amulets, in which they are analysed as part of a systematic classification of healing and protective practices, on the other a more romantic view of Canaan and his collecting activity as part of Palestine's cultural past.

The scientific approach is present in Gisela Helmeke's contribution. As the curator of the exhibition, her text aimed to present Canaan as a man of science and product of his time. She engaged with Canaan's writings and with the way he understood, studied and organised the amulets. Helmeke's choice of arranging the 162 objects according to their function in magic and popular medicine corresponds to the same categories that Canaan employed in his *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* in 1914. For the exhibition, the objects were divided in ten groups: 1. Protection against the *Qarīna*, 2. General Protection, 3. Protection of Children, 4. Relief of Difficult Labor and Birth, 5. Votive Offerings, 6. Protection against the Evil Eye, 7. Protection against the Evil Soul, 8. Amulet Quality Jewellery, 9. Healing from Diseases, 10. Talismans and Pilgrimage Certificates.[467] The description of the objects in each group tell us what is obviously there; no extra information is given on who used them and how were employed to achieve the desired protection. No further explanation is given about the *qarīna*, how the evil eye worked, or how objects from sacred sites —such as pilgrimage certificates, were used as protective or healing devices. The disposition and descriptions chosen are the exact same words that Canaan registered in his own catalogue, meaning that although there was curatorial work in selecting and organising the objects, there was a conscious choice of presenting Canaan's own descriptions and approach to the amulets without much extra information or interpretation.

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[466] F. Aboubakr. "Peasantry in Palestinian Folktales: Sites of Memory, Homeland and Collectivity" in *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2017), p. 224

[467] K. Nashef, (Ed.) *Ya kafi, Ya shafi, The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.* Palestine: Birzeit University Publications, 1998

The largest part of the contributions displays a nostalgia for the Palestinian culture of the past represented by Canaan and his objects. Canaan is presented as a person committed to his country, and aware that the political situation could lead to the disappearance of much of Palestine's material culture. He is depicted as part of the rich cultural life that Jerusalem had before the Nakba characterised not only by intellectual output but also by political awareness. Nostalgia is also expressed towards the amulets and the world they represent. As discussed, Canaan himself viewed the amulets as nostalgic reminders of the rural culture that was disappearing. So in an intricate way, the nostalgia towards Canaan and his amulets overlaps with Canaan's own nostalgic view of his present and past.

The way nostalgia is articulated in the catalogue draws from a particular reading of Canaan's works. Mentioned before is the fact that the exhibition used as a basis Canaan's scientific methodology, however, the exhibition also draw elements from a particular interpretation of Canaan's view of his country and the amulets. Canaan expressed in many occasions that his research on Palestine's folklore aimed to record what he saw under threat of disappearing. This willingness of recording however, should not be confused with a willingness of preserving. For Canaan the amulets and other aspects of folklore had to be recorded, but there was no question that modernity was the best option, especially regarding hygiene and medical practices. Based on this view, the exhibition presented the amulets as relics of a life that no longer existed. This understanding of the amulets is problematic, because it sets them in a frozen past, as if they had stopped circulating at all, whereas in fact amulets still circulate as protective/medical devices, and continue to live as commercial, ethnographic, museum, art, and nationalist objects.

Father, friend and inspiration, is how Leila recalls her father. Her contribution to the catalogue revolves around her father's life, his impact on the way she relates to her country, and the development of her individual and social life. Regarding the amulets, she recalls how her father's interest began as he carried out medical visits in the countryside during his appointment as Director of the Muslim-funded polyclinic in the Old City, and later as itinerant doctor during the First World War. Reaching out to the rural population was decisive in developing his interest in folklore. During this period her father obtained many amulets through constant encounters with patients, who also provided information about the objects as analysed in previous chapters. What is interesting to note here is that Leila does not mention any other way in which her father obtained amulets, although

from other sources we know that most of them were actually bought and not in this period.[468] Leila's focus on this period and this way of amulet acquisition as the most remarkable for the assemblage of the collection may be explained from the way peasant culture had been revived and placed at the centre of Palestine's folklore during the years of the Intifada. The image of Canaan engaging with the rural population through his medical encounters, and getting amulets directly from the users, gives authenticity to his collection as a representative repository of Palestine's indigenous population's culture.

5.5 Socio-political background

The importance given to the pre-Nakba period through the figure of Canaan and the material culture in *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* is better understood when analysing the historical events. There are three moments in the development of the political events that help to understand the background of the exhibition: the Oslo Accords and the relative stability it represented for exhibiting material culture; the post 1967 Palestinian Awakening and the study of folklore; and the democratising aspect of the Intifada and the symbolism of the *fellāḥīn* culture.

The exhibition took place in a time of relative peace after the long years of the Intifada, which came to an end in 1993 followed by the signing of the Declaration of Principles on September 13 of that same year. This was the beginning of the peace process known as the Oslo Accords which eventually led to the recognition of a Palestinian National Authority as the formal official body representing the Palestinian people. As a two-edge weapon, this political agreement created on the one hand, a framework of relative stability and security in some areas of the West Bank and for some Palestinians; it was a pact that benefited particular sectors of the society and inhabitants of particular towns. On the other hand, it meant the establishment of new political boundaries between Israel and Palestine, and the fragmentation of the West Bank in area A, B and C, which divided the society and made difficult the mobility of Palestinians throughout the West Bank. Quoting Ilan Pappe, the Oslo process can be summarised as "the paving of highways, the digging of tunnels, (which connected Israel and the settlements in the West Bank) and the cantonisation of the West Bank"[469].

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[468] K. Nashef. Introduction to the Canaan´s catalogue in Arabic.

[469] I. Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine,* p. 243

The Oslo Accords gave Palestine a status of political liminality. Although after the agreement Palestine had for the first time an internationally-recognized political authority, in practice it did not have sufficient autonomy to pass laws. This liminality not only affected the way people moved and lived, but also the way narratives about heritage were constructed.[470] Until 1993, the 1929 Law of Palestinian Archaeology or Antiquities Ordinance[471] enacted by the British High Commissioner in Palestine was the only applicable law for the protection of cultural heritage.[472] Even after the formation of the Palestine National Authority and its legislative arm the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Council was not been able to enact newer drafts for the protection of cultural heritage. According to the 1929 Law, the kinds of materials worthy of conservation were objects whether constructed, shaped, inscribed, excavated, produced or modified by human agency that date back to earlier than 1700CE.[473] In this definition of cultural heritage, ethnographic material was definitely not included; in other words, all material objects coming from the inhabitants of modern Palestine remained out of any kind of protection.

The liminality of Palestine regarding this matter became clear when modifications to the 1929 Law were proposed by the recently founded Palestinian National Authority. After revisiting the Law and after the failure to reform it, much awareness has been raised on how to deal with cultural heritage that is not included in it. In the absence of a State, private institutions have taken over the duty. These have taken responsibility for protecting material that is not considered in the official law. Chiara Di Cesari[474] and Veronique Bontemps[475] have shown how NGO's and private institutions have played an important role in defining, recovering and administering forms of *turāth* in contemporary Palestine. The Tawfik Canaan Collection composed of ethnographic material from

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470 R.R. Sauders. "Between Paralysis and Practice: Theorizing the Political Liminality of Palestinian Cultural Heritage" Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archeological Congress 2008,

471 Antiquities Ordinance No. 51, 1929". Official Gazette of the Government of Palestine. Gazette Extraordinary: 1190–1191. 31 December 1929.

472 R.R. Saunders. *Op. Cit.* p.475

473 Article 2 of the 1929 Antiquities Ordinance; Cfr. R.R. Saunders. p.467

474 C. De Cesari. (2014). World Heritage and the Nation-State: a view from Palestine. In C. De Cesari, & A. Rigney (Eds.), *Transnational memory: circulation, articulation, scales* (pp. 247-270). (Media and cultural memory; No. 19). Berlin: De Gruyter.

475 V. Bontemps. *Ville et patrimoine en Palestine. Une ethnographie des savonneries de Naplouse*, Paris, Karthala-IISMM, 2012, 348 p.

the early 20th century would have never been subjected to protection if it was not for private initiatives.

5.5.1 *Folklore studies, Palestinian awakening*

The Nakba is the most important event that has changed the history of Palestinians and the way they relate to their past. Due to its disastrous consequences such as forced migration and displacement, the Nakba occupies a central place in the collective memory affecting the way other historical events such as the Naksa (1967 War) and the Intifadas are remembered and symbolised. Memories of the past come from generations who have experienced the events in different ways, and articulate two periods: one before, and one after the Nakba. They have developed their own particular imageries about their land and people either from the diaspora or from within the actual boundaries of Palestine.[476]

The 1967 War, or Naksa, is another particular moment of the Palestinian identity formation process.[477] The strengthening of the conception of a Palestinian national state and its right to exist were formulated after 1967 and expressed in what Nazmi al-Jubeh has identified as the "Palestinian Awakening",[478] a moment of consciousness of losing all which led to the preservation of archaeological sites and historical buildings, and to the "museumisation" of ethnographical remains such as traditional dresses, jewellery, amulets, artefacts of daily use, etc.[479]. This awakening implied a wave of awareness of the threat posed by the Israeli occupation. People became aware of the precariousness of losing what remained of the Palestinian cultural heritage, evidence of identity and historic rootedness. A growing concern of the erasure of elements of urban and village life led to the formation of collections and the exhibition of objects such as manuscripts, books, the manufacture of traditional dress, including weaving and embroidery, the fabrication of jewellery and other kinds

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476 S. Tamari. "Burgeois Nostalgia and the Abandoned City" in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 23, Number 1 & 2, 2003, pp. 173-180

477 In this research I am not interested in going deep into the identity formation process, but to highlight that such process is relevant in the study of specific moments of the Collection, namely when it was created, named and exhibited.

478 N. al-Jubeh. "Palestinian Identity" in *Palestinian Identity in relation to Time and Space*, edited by Mitri Raheb, Beit Jala: Diyar Publisher, 2014.

479 Museumisation is when "objects that previously had plural, ritualistic and culturally specific functions and meanings are now fossilised and displayed under the label of cultural heritage and used as a channel for political mobilisation." L. Taraki. "The Development of Political Consciousness among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 1967-1987" in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, ed. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990) p.64

of handcrafts, traditional medicine and amulets, and non-tangible forms of culture such as story-telling.[480]

This Palestinian Awakening, of the aftermath of the 1967 War, was developed by those Palestinians who remained in the West Bank. This is not to say that prior to 1967 there was a lack of awareness of the devastating effects that the political situation had on Palestine's cultural heritage since the Nakba. First and second generation of refugees living in the diaspora were aware of the situation, nevertheless due to their residency abroad they remained excluded from the narrative that emerged in 1967.[481] This Awakening urged to protect and "cling" to whatever material (and inmaterial) remain that could be found such as old houses, photos, clothes, etc., arousing at the same time the interest in forming collections and of establishing museums in order to preserve the national heritage from being lost, dispersed — or even appropriated by the Israelis as their own.[482] With this awareness in mind, people who were forced to let go their family treasures and sell them to get some income, carefully chose where to place these valuable objects. Ms. Widad Kawar[483] relates how, as her collection of Palestinian attire became known, women from villages would choose to sell their dresses and accessories to her and not to shops where they could end up cut into pieces or sold to people who were not interested in preserving Palestine's folklore.[484] These women knew that Ms. Kawar could take care and give to their belongings proper place as part of Palestine's *turāth*.

Folklorists played a very important role in the Palestinian Awakening. In 1989 Sharif Kanaana, one of the most renown folklorists, published a collection of Palestinian folktales: *Speak,*

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480 There are many examples of the "museumisation" of Palestinian heritage through the foundation of different organisations and associations such as Inash Al-Usra Association, Dar al-Tifl Museum, Birzeit University Museum, El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe, among many others.

481 S. Tamari. "Bourgeois Nostalgia and the Abandoned City" in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 23, Number 1 & 2, 2003, pp. 173-180

482 V. Tamari. Personal electronic communication, Nov. 2017

483 Widad K. Kawar is one of many Palestinians who collected objects considered part of the Palestinian heritage. She is known as *umm al-libās al-filasṭīnī,* the mother of Palestinian dress. Cfr. Kawar, W.K., *Threads of Identity*, Rimal Publications, 2011

484 W.K. Kawar. *Threads of Identity*, p. 22

Bird, Speak Again,[485] and in 2001 its correspondent Arabic version *Qul Ya Tayer*.[486] Originating from the rural environment, these folktales disclosed the language and culture of the peasantry. They contain descriptions of the culture of the *fellāḥin*. Farah Aboubakr has analysed these and other collections of folktales, and points out to how by using paratextual elements, folktales shaped the image of the Palestinian peasant, the *fellāḥ,* as a national signifier; a process that, according to Salim Tamari, already started in the 1920s and 1930s,[487] and that developed later phases throughout the 20th century. In the 1960's after the occupation of the West Bank and later during the first intifada (1987 to 1993), we can recognise this linkage between peasant culture and the national spirit as a later stage of this Palestinian Awakening.[488]

The First Intifada (1987) played an important role in the process of the Palestinian Awakening. It was an event that led to structural and ideological changes. It has been defined as a broad-based Palestinian resistance to defend the national identity.[489] It is considered the first major mass mobilisation of Palestine's population as a whole.[490] It came as a response to the destruction of the political, social and economic infrastructures of the occupied Palestinian population, which since 1967 was left completely dependent on the Israeli economy. Because the entire society had been shaken from within and because the destruction affected all social groups, the First Intifada included people from different social, economic and religious backgrounds. It has been considered a distinct stage in the struggle for national liberation in which common interests united all sectors of society.[491] This democratisation of the struggle was an organised revolt on a national level despite the fact that during the years it lasted, it generated conflict between social groups. During the revolt, traditional social and political structures became ineffective, and changes in a structural and

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485 S. Kanaana and I. Muhawi, *Speak, Bird, Speak Again. Palestinian Arab Folk Tales,* L.A. California: University of California Press, 1989.

486 S. Kanaana and I. Muhawi, *Qūl yā ṭayr, ḥikāyāt lil-aṭfāl min al-turāth al-sha'bī al-filasṭīnī*, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīnīya, 2001

487 S. Tamari, "Soul of the Nation", p.77

488 F. Aboubakr. "Peasantry in Palestinian Folktales: Sites of Memory, Homeland and Collectivity" in *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (2017), pp. 217-238

489 E.S. Kuttab. *Op. Cit*. p.72

490 E.S. Kuttab. "Palestinian women in the intifada: Fighting on two fronts" in *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Spring 1993, Vol. 15 Issue 2, p.69-86

491 E.S. Kuttab. *Op. Cit*. p. 70

ideological level were implemented allowing the foundation of new organisations, which in turn helped in creating a national awakening and identity consciousness. [492]

During the First Intifada particular cultural elements were placed at the core of the national discourse. The mobilisation of all kinds of social groups required the creation of particular symbols, effective for everyone. It is during these years that elements from Palestine's folklore became part of the narrative of the nation. The rural culture was re-appropriated through the figure of the peasant, the *fellāḥ,* who became a central figure in West-Bank Palestinian culture.[493] Ted Swedenburg has analysed how this sort of identification with the peasantry became part of Palestine's national culture. He argues that its centrality was established by leaders of the national movement, who by using it as a symbol, were able to unite and mobilise all social groups against a specific form of settler-colonialism. The *fellāḥ* turned out to be the most suitable figure to make claims about national identity because of his inherent relation to the soil, the land, the territory, as well as what he stood for, namely the repository of accumulated unchanging customs and beliefs that linked the present to the ancient past.[494]

The creation of the *fellāḥ* as a national symbol has affected the approach of the Palestinians towards the rural culture. The culture of the *fellāḥīn* has become an identification marker for most Palestinians, even for those who are not related to rural life at all. In 1998 when the exhibition *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* was planned, this rural culture had already been placed at the heart of Palestine's culture, therefore an exhibition on folk practices around protection and healing would occupy an important place within this imagery of national symbols. Since every Palestinian personified a peasant, the relation to the objects exhibited must have been quite interesting. Material culture that once belonged to a particular social group, was now received as part of the national culture, that certainly had to be protected and promoted.

5.6 The museographical work around the objects

After the donation of the collection to BZU, and as part of the research made for the exhibition, the Collection was subjected to analysis and classification. Besides the categories established by Taufiq Canaan and used by G. Helmeke for the exhibition of 1998, another classification had to be made

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[492] E.S. Kuttab, *Op. Cit.* p.73

[493] T. Swedenburg. "The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier" in *Anthropological Quarterly;* Jan. 1 1990; 63, 1; ProQuest, pp. 18-30.

[494] T. Swedenburg. *Ibid*. p.19

for museographic purposes. Based on the materials and the object's shape, this new classification showed the richness of Palestinian cultural heritage. Materials such as red coral and cowrie shells from the Red Sea, *al-mīs* wood beads from Jerusalem, milk beads from Bethlehem, stamped soaps from Nablus, Nabi Musa stones from the Jericho area, and many other objects coming from different parts of the country were all categorised as Palestinian amulets.

These categories highlighted the diversity of the Palestinian regions, but simultaneously detached the objects from their use in medical treatments. This museographic classification of the amulets, which focused more on materials rather than on the form of use, differs from Canaan's analysis of the amulets in context, that we find in his published articles. However, the classification resembles somehow some of the cardboards on which Canaan arranged the amulets, according to kind of material and type of amulet. This classification based on materials is very interesting, because it discloses the artificiality of the nature of collections and the way objects can be used and placed in many ways according to the story (some)one wants to convey.

Below is the list of categories made by the curator/museographer at Birzeit University Museum, Baha Joubeh and the anthropologist Khaled al-Nashef. Arranged on the basis of materials employed and the way amulets were used, nine groups emerged under which the amulets were classified. All the data to determine to which group each amulet belonged come from the cardboards on which Taufiq Canaan placed and enumerated the amulets.[495]

- The first comprises those objects that are known as *ḥujub*, which are talismans written on paper and placed in triangular cloth, leather wrappings or in cylinders or silver cases.
- The second group comprises jewellery including necklaces, bracelets, rings and semiprecious stones; kinds of items that are still used although their talismanic properties have been dropped.
- The third group contains glass beads and stones of many different kinds, which are used mainly in healing and repelling the evil eye.
- The fourth group are paper amulets that include talismans, supplications and prayers which were hung to protect homes and their occupants.
- The fifth group comprises pilgrims' certificates bearing religious symbols, either in the form of stamps or writings, which were given to pilgrims who visited holy sites in Jerusalem and Hebron.

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[495] B. al-Jubeh. "Magic and Talismans. The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 22-23 (2005): 103-108.

- The sixth group comprises votive offerings made of silver in the shape of human body parts such as hands, feet, hearts, heads, foetuses, etc.; these were hung in churches and on religious icons to heal illnesses and protect the health of children.
- The seventh group contains organic materials such as animal bones and tortoise shells, often bearing talismanic writings.
- The eighth group are the *fear cups*, which are bowls that contain inscriptions of Qur'anic verses and supplications; water was placed in the cups and left for a particular amount of time in order to get beneficial properties for it to be drunk by a child or a frightened person.
- The ninth and last group were ceramic dishes on which talismanic inscriptions were written to cure diseases and facilitate the birth of children.

These museographic categories, however, are not fixed and might overlap with others when arranging the objects from a different perspective. In fact, in the particular case of my research, amulets from all nine groups are considered to show that no mater what shape or material, all have gone through different moments in their life. In each phase they have been subjected to the cultural construct that gives meaning and sense to their use in concrete situations.

5.7 Taufiq Canaan, the Palestinian

So far the Palestinian-ness of the Canaan Collection has been analysed within the context of its donation to BZU in 1995 and its exhibition in 1998. It has been explained how historical events such as the Nakba, the 1967 War, and the First Intifada shaped the way Palestinians approached cultural heritage as part of their national identity by the time of the donation and the exhibition. The Canaan amulets were presented to the public as part of this cultural heritage through the figure of Taufiq Canaan, a representative of the political consciousness that started to emerge in the pre-Nakba period. The amulets were also presented as part of the cultural heritage because they came from the peasant culture, which because of its association with the land, had become embedded in how Palestinians self-identify.[496] By the mid 1990s when the Collection was acquired, studied and exhibited, the centrality of the rural culture in the national identity made it easier for the audience to approach and understand the Canaan objects, which after all were part of all Palestinians' cultural heritage.

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[496] T. Swedenburg. "The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier", *Anthropological Quarterly*; Jan 1, 1990; 63: 1, p. 18-30

In this section as a way to complement the historical development of the identification of the amulets as Palestinian, I turn into the period of formation of the Collection to explore how this Palestinian-ness was constructed around them. The Palestinian-ness in question started to emerge during Canaan's early life, but evolved and had different features in later decades. This section analyses how politically embedded Canaan's collecting activity was when looking at his gradual involvement in the political life of his country. His collecting activity was intertwined with his medical work, ethnographic research, and political activism, and it took place as a result of his interactions with people from different backgrounds, such as other physicians, anthropologists, collectors, antiquarians and political figures, such as we have explored in the previous chapters. Therefore, it would be naive to neglect the impact of Canaan's political ideas in the formation of his identity and consequently in the Palestinian-ness that he attributed to the folklore he studied and the objects he collected.

Considering that collections disclose aspects of the identity of the collector, how was the development of Canaan's self-identification as a Palestinian man reflected in the amulets he chose to collect? How in turn, did the process of forming a collection affect Canaan's identity? How did Taufiq Canaan engage with the amulets as objects from a "Palestinian" culture, in other words, how was this Palestinian-ness understood by him? How did it take shape during the years he collected? The aim of this section is to show how the Palestinian-ness of the amulets was gradually constructed during Canaan's collecting years. Spanning from 1905 to 1947 and taking into account the events that marked Palestine's social and political life, it is possible to trace the development of Canaan's identification with a Palestinian cause, as well as his different attitudes towards the peasants and their amulets, from objects of scientific research to representatives of a valuable national culture.

Taufiq Canaan has mainly been studied as an ethnographer; he indeed carried out extensive ethnographic work and published vastly about Palestine's folklore. However his ethnographic works were part of a larger corpus that also included medical and political writings, which were in a sort of dialogue. Taufiq Canaan was a very much engaged in politics, and as we go through his biography it is possible to contextualise his ethnographic and medical works in the political life of the country. Philippe Bourmaud has addressed the entanglements between Canaan's political views and his work. He mentions that his ethnographic research was not politicised.[497] Although the contents of his writings might have remained scientific in nature, Canaan's involvement in different

[497] P. Bormaud, *Son of the Country*, p. 114

associations of archaeological research played a role in the development of his political ideas. After all, researchers in these archaeological institutes were working within a framework set by the political agendas of the respective countries that sponsored them. His medical activity, on the other hand, has been analysed by Sandra Sufyan as part of the larger medical scene that took place in early 20th century Palestine. Medical activities were part of healthcare projects and their entanglements with political activism were clear.[498] Taufiq Canaan's major political activism took place through his medical activity, particularly through the foundation of the Palestinian Medical Association.[499] It has been very recent, however, that Canaan has been approached from his political writings. Sarah Irving's PhD research has explored for the first time Taufiq Canaan political pamphlets disclosing in detail his involvement in the political life of his country.[500]

So far, the political aspect of Canaan's medical and ethnographic research does not include his collecting activity. The Collection was hidden for long time, from 1947 to 1995; a fact that explains why his collecting activity has not received the same attention as his numerous publications despite the fact that since 1998 the collection is available to the public and it is known as the largest collection of Palestinian amulets in the world. The exploration of Canaan's collecting enterprise in relation to his political activity might bring new insights on how collecting different kinds of material, not only reflected but shaped his identity as a Palestinian.

2.8 Collecting as a political act

Taufiq Canaan's collecting enterprise developed throughout the decades. His changing attitudes towards what was considered "Palestinian" can be seen throughout his writings and in his involvement in the politics of his country. In this sense, his motivations in collecting and his approach to the amulets as remnants of a Palestinian rural culture changed through the years. According to Vera Tamari, Canaan "dealt with the amulets in a pedagogical way and from a scientific viewpoint rather than from a national viewpoint".[501] It is true that he devoted his time to the study of Palestinian folklore, to preserve material evidence of traditional healing and

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[498] S. Sufian. *Healing the Land and the Nation: Malaria and the Zionist project in Mandatory Palestine, 1920-1947,* University of Chicago Press, 2007

[499] P. Bourmaud, *A Son of the Country*, p. 114

[500] S. Irving. *Intellectual networks, language and knowledge under colonialism: the work of Stephan Stephan, Elias Haddad and Tawfiq Canaan in Palestine, 1909-1948.*

[501] V. Tamari. Op. Cit., p.71

prophylaxis, and to compare "popular medicine with medicine in the scientific meaning of the word and its related branches"[502]. However, it is difficult to assert that there were no nationalistic motivations in Canaan's actions, since he was very politically active and became involved in refuting the Zionist propaganda in the 1930's. This can be seen when comparing the first years of his collecting enterprise, when there was a relative stability and the relations with the Jewish community were still working well, with later years when working conditions became increasingly difficult for the Palestinian population due to foreign settlement in the country.

Canaan's collecting activity was shaped through his interaction with other collectors and scholars interested in Palestinian folklore as analysed in Chapter 3. One of the ethnographers who influenced Canaan's ethnographic work was Hilma Granqvist, the first woman who carried out long fieldwork periods (in the Bethlehem area) in order access the private life of local inhabitants. Canaan learned this methodological approach and applied it to his ethnographic work. From his interaction with other scholars, Canaan also became aware of the access that Arabic as his mother tongue gave him, specially during his years of medical practice when he acquired amulets from his patients. Translators were very much in demand by foreign scholars, and the fact that he was a native speaker differentiated him from many others. He could establish relations with his patients in a more intimate way from the fact that he could speak the same language, but also because he was a physician and paid medical visits regularly.

The shaping of Canaan's identity as Palestinian might also have been influenced by how foreigners perceived him as a native ethnographer. This perception was quite positive and from it developed some collaborations. Canaan was seen as a key scholar due to his cultural background in combination with his Western education. In 1929 Canaan was hired to carry out research due to his Arab background and his skills in European languages. Stated in the preface of *Studies in the Topography and Folklore of Petra:*

> "The expedition sent to Petra by Mr. Henry Mond in the spring of 1929, under the leadership of Mr. Geoge Horsfield Director of Antiquities on Transjordan, was able to secure the services of Dr. T. Canaan for three weeks. He was peculiarly qualified to investigate the topography and folklore of Petra, as only an Arab, with the capacity to cope with a formidable periodical literature in English, French and German could have sifted the chaotic nomenclature in so short time… Dr. Canaan's profession was an additional asset, as aided

[502] K. Nashef, Op. Cit., p.19

by a travelling medical outfit, he was able to obtain confidence of the local Bedouin. The result was a collection of legends connected with the monuments…"[503]

Canaan's collecting was entangled with his political activities in a very particular way. His collecting activity was indeed a fundamental part of his ethnographic work, it was complementary to his writings in some cases, but also much of what he collected inspired him to write particular papers on Palestine's folklore. Because Canaan was active in different fields he forged a network that included European and Arab collectors, merchants, antique dealers, religious and political figures. This network of acquaintances did not only play a role in the kinds of material Canaan acquired (like the pilgrimage certificates, and the objects that some acquaintances donated to him); there are records of all the people involved in Canaan's collecting that included political figures with whom Canaan established specific relations with political purposes. The acquaintances also played a role in shaping Canaan's forms of collecting, such as collecting for others, and collecting with the aim to represent Palestine's medical culture abroad.

Canaan's political activism took place mainly through the membership of different societies and associations. Through his publications we know that he was involved with the institutions of the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine (*Deutscher Palästina-Verein*), such as the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (*Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des heiligen Landes*) founded in 1900 in Jerusalem. Having being raised in a German Protestant environment, Canaan was in contact with researchers of this institute, particularly with Gustaf Dalman, appointed the first director from 1902 to 1917, and editor of the Journal Palestine Yearbook from 1905 to 1926.

Taufiq Canaan was also a member of the Palestine Oriental Society, which was founded in 1920 after the British opened the field of archaeology and gave green light for excavation projects promoting an important influx of scholars from different nationalities.[504] The POS was inaugurated in Jerusalem, it aimed to expand the study of antiquities of the Holy Land, cultivate and publish academic work on the Ancient East, but foremost, to create a space that for the first time would gather scholars from different countries, societies and religious bodies.[505] The international

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[503] Preface written by A.C. Conway. Cfr. T. Canaan. *Studies in the Topography and Folklore of Petra*, Jerusalem: Beyt al-Makdes, 1930, p.III

[504] JPOS Vol I. p.2

[505] JPOS Vol.I, p.1

character of the POS allowed Canaan to publish in close cooperation with Jewish scholars and scholars affiliated to the missionary institutes. By 1924 Canaan had developed from just a member of the POS into being one of the editors of the POS journal; a position in which he had to engage with the authors over the contents and style of their articles. It is in this involvement that I found Canaan's activities in the POS politically loaded.

Nadia Abu El-Haj has brought to the attention the role of Jewish archaeology during the British Mandate in creating material facts for legitimating a nascent national narrative. The foundation of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society in 1914 and its activities since 1920 may have had an impact in the way Palestinian scholars carried out research. The JPES was in charge of the excavation work in archaeological sites and led the project of hebraisation. The study of the Hebrew language in turn led to the situation where scholars of the Jewish community started changing personal and geographical names from the way they were called and used by actual inhabitants into the Hebrew version. This hebraisation of the landscape was part of a larger project of "returning to their nation"[506] Members of the JPES were known through the publication of the JPES bulletin. Some of them were also contributors to the Journal of the POS, with whom Canaan must have had interesting debates. So when debates about the historical origin of places began to emerge, Canaan found himself right in the middle of them due to his involvement in archaeological institutes and societies.

Canaan's involvement and contribution to the POS disclose how the Journal of the POS had become for Canaan a sort of battlefield where, in a very subtle way, he was counteracting articles with a political load. In the issue of 1930 Canaan published for the first time a paper that did not revolve around folklore; he published two new documents on the surrender of Jerusalem to the British in December 1917. This volume was published within the framework of some ongoing discussions among the members of the POS about the closure of the Society. The hesitance of keeping the Society alive might have been the result of the political instability of Jerusalem after the August 1929 Buraq Uprising. In the introduction of this volume, F.M. Abel, the president of the POS at the time, thanks the particular efforts of Taufiq Canaan and M. Hertzberg for keeping the Society alive. In the volume, we find the contribution of the Ottoman Historian Asad Jibrail Rustum from the American University of Beirut; the first published paper from a scholar located outside Jerusalem. Rustum's paper on the 1839 Peasant's revolt in Palestine presented a couple of new documents for the study of this revolt. Although the author does not discuss the relevance of the

[506] N. Abu El-Haj. "Producing (Arti) Facts." p.52

revolt itself, it is not fortuitous that this topic appeared in a time of political instability. In fact Canaan's and Rustum's papers were the first ones published in the JPOS that dealt with the modern history of Palestine, and addressed key events in the political life of Palestinians.

The POS was for Canaan a platform from where he could reach out to a wider public for his articles. In 1927 Luzac & Co., an English publishing house in London, published the second edition of Canaan's remarkable monograph *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries*. The first edition of it was in the JPOS, and appeared in four parts in the volumes issued in 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927. It was published in Jerusalem, but read in Palestine and abroad.[507] The work, in English, was intended for an English-speaking audience that included British, Americans and other European nationals living in Palestine under the British government, who had been somehow obliged to learn and use English as a vehicular language. The publication of a second edition disclosed the success of its reception, but also the networks that Canaan had built over the years. By 1927, Canaan had become president of the Palestine Oriental Society, he had already created a network that was spread beyond Jerusalem, he was known through his medical and ethnographic work, as well as for his role as board member in the Palestine Oriental Society since 1920, and the editor of its journal since 1924. His decision to publish this monograph in England says much of Canaan's interest to be read abroad, in the centre of the British power. One year later, in 1928, the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies of the University of London published a review pointing out the value of Canaan's research for the scholarship on Arab folklore, and praising his knowledge on the subject, his familiarity with Palestine's rural life, plus his acknowledgement of contemporary scholars such as Goldziher, Dalman, Curtiss, Jaussen, Lane, among others.[508]

In this second edition Canaan mentions in the preface:

> "The primitive features of Palestine are disappearing so quickly… Thus it has become the duty of every student of Palestine and the Near East of Archaeology and the Bible, to lose no time in collecting as fully and accurately as possible all available material concerning folklore, customs and superstitions current in the Holy Land. Such material is… of the

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[507] Members of the POS lived mainly in Palestine, England and the U.S. according to the list of members published in 1924. Diverse academic institutions, particularly American Universities and Libraries collaborated with the POS. Cfr. JPOS, vol. 4, 1924, p215-220

[508] M. Smith. "Reviewed Work: Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine by Taufik Canaan". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies,* University of London, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1928): 169-171

> greatest importance for the study of ancient oriental civilisation and for the study of primitive religion… I, as a son of the country, have felt it my special duty to help in this scientific work…"[509]

From this excerpt we can see that Canaan's motivation to collect and record sprang from his concern about the disappearance of elements of Palestinian culture. His use of the term "primitive" should not surprise us, it was very much used among anthropologist in an evolutionist sense; primitive features were valued because they reiterated the advancement of modernity. For Canaan, a modern man, these primitive features were the traces of the existence of his people "the Canaanites" in the Levant, and therefore a way to claim legitimacy over the foreign settlers.[510] Canaan's need to collect seemed to be different from that of foreign students of Palestine and the Near East, whose feelings of duty to preserve the "primitive features" relied more on their interest in studying it, in keeping it alive merely for scientific purposes. In the quote Canaan also mentions that the main factor of the disappearance of such features was the change in local conditions, like the introduction of European education, migration, and the political influence of the Mandatory Power. For Canaan, migration includes all waves and groups of migrants, not only Jewish. He also mentions that part of the change stem from the fact that many Palestinians are migrating to Europe and the U.S., where they stay or get education that is later applied when they go back to Palestine.

In this second edition of *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries,* Canaan openly expresses his uneasiness with Palestine's situation; a concern that does not appear in the first publication, and which informs us of Canaan's ways to manoeuvre in different settings. He openly talked about this concern to a public that was mainly living in England, something that he never did in the JPOS. Important to highlight is that in the JPOS, Canaan was not alone, he was always part of a bigger group of scholars that included many Jews, some of them active in the political live of the Yishuv. So, in order to maintain an atmosphere of peaceful academic cooperation, Canaan had to be subtle in the way he expressed his political opinions.

Even though Canaan's always kept a sense of diplomacy, part of his ethnographic work and his collecting activity, to record what is disappearing due to colonisation, was in fact a political statement. When Canaan openly expresses his duty to collect what is being threatened particularly by the British policies, he is giving value to this that must be recorded. And when he mentions his concern about the disappearance of certain forms of life, he is referring to the primitive elements of

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[509] T. Canaan. *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine.* London: Luzac & Co., 1927

[510] Personal communication with Salim Tamari, October 2020.

Palestine, embodied in the *fellāḥīn*. For Canaan they represent the living heritage of an accumulated past that included many ancient cultures that dwelled in Palestine, like the Canaanite, Philistine, Hebraic, Nabatean, Syrio-Aramaic, and Arab peoples.[511]

2.8.1 The duty of collecting

In the last years of the Ottoman period and during the transition to the British Mandate, Palestinians became aware of the transformation of their land after seeing waves of foreigners settling in the biggest towns, on the coast and the hinterland. Canaan's collecting process followed a rising awareness of the loss and displacement, leading him to consider his collection an important reservoir of Palestinian culture. Taufiq Canaan lived in a period of very fast changes in which Palestine went from being part of the Ottoman Empire, to become a British colony, and to end up being an occupied region dependent on the State of Israel. Throughout these decades and as a result of these political events, Canaan's view of Palestine changed substantially. His writings show his development as a physician and ethnographer, but also his involvement in the political situation of his country. In the same manner, the objects that he collected and the kinds of objects he researched reflect a multifaceted and dynamic vision of Palestine.

The way Canaan depicted the peasantry in his writings discloses the meaning he attached to the amulets he collected from them. When he depicts the peasants related to a Biblical past, the amulets are also considered part of that image, but when he presents the peasants as living subjects who have the agency to transform their present, the amulets become valuable representatives of such agency of the owners. In revising the development of his writings, we see a gradual dissociation between the Biblical remains and the actual practice of the peasant culture. Canaan gives more and more agency to the *fellāḥīn,* showing how they had managed to change through time and adapted to everyday life. In his research on Petra, the agency of the native people is very clear in the way they have named and related to the topography of their environment. They have given names to places as the result of their everyday engagement with the landscape and the people.

The process that we see in Canaan's work, where he grants increasingly more agency to the peasants and Bedouins, mirrors what happens in the political life of the country. Looking for its own voice, Palestinians peasants start to become active in counteracting the British policies. Similarly, Canaan also saw his work developing away from depicting peasants as remnants of a Biblical past and their amulets as part of it, towards a kind of ethnographic work that is more in

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511 S. Tamari. "Lepers, Lunatics and Saints", p. 98

tune with a contemporary Palestine. A good example of this point is his later work on the status of Arab women in Palestine.[512]

In this sense, we can notice a subtle different approach to the amulets from the first items Canaan collected to later acquisitions. At first, his acquisitions followed his interest in traditional medicine, which he compared to the biomedicine that he practiced in his. Traditional medicine was seen as part of Palestine's folklore. Simultaneously, the items represented a reminiscence of the primitive, but were a link between the Biblical past and the present. Canaan's collecting activity eventually reached a point where amulets became representatives of the life of contemporary peasantry, who despite their cultural difference, were as Canaan, heirs of the land. Peasants' amulets became valuable because they embodied the strong connection that Palestinians have with their land. This change of attitude is well worthy to be analysed since it shows how in four decades Canaan, as maybe other urban Palestinians did, developed ideas of national belonging and transformed his views towards the missions' policies, immigration, and the peasantry. Canaan always oscillated between the multiple components of his own identity, his ambivalence can be seen in many layers but also gradually changing through the years.

Contrary to the idea that Canaan did not feel threatened of losing it all,[513] I argue that in his last years of collecting Canaan was aware of the implications that Jewish settlements in Palestine would bring in the coming years. So the picture that Canaan built his collection as a pure scientific interest, fails to recognise him as a changing, ambivalent person who felt the duty to record features of the culture of Palestine that were tending to disappear. Collecting out of duty representative objects of a fading present seemed to be a sort of protonational attitude.[514] What follows highlights specific moments in the development of this "feeling of duty".

Rashid Khalidi has pointed out that the start of the First World War was one of the factors that awakened the first sentiments of a Palestinian national identity. The Great War, as it is referred to in Palestinian historiography, had substantial economic and political consequences in the Middle East. The instability that it brought can be seen not only in a national, but also in an individual scale. Palestinian men were recruited by the Ottoman army to fight, Canaan was no exception. In

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[512] When Canaan's house was invaded in 1948, he lost many books. Canaan mentions that his greatest loss was his not yet published book "Die arabische Fray v.d. Wiege bis zum Grab". Cfr. T. Canaan, The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs II, p.136.

[513] S. Mejcher-Attasi, *Archives, Museums,* p.4

[514] S. Tamari. *Mountain Against the Sea*, p.2

1914 Canaan was appointed doctor of the 27th Infantry Regiment and sent to Nazareth.[515] During his enrolment in the Military he was far from his family, friends and acquaintances. Outside of his urban milieu of Jerusalem, Canaan found himself confronted with his inability to communicate since most of the soldiers in his regiment were Turks. In his memoirs Canaan expressed his feeling as an outsider. In addition to the isolation and language problems, he also struggled because he was unable to practice medicine up to his standards due to the poor quality of medical services provided by the Ottoman Army to its soldiers. Moreover, he remarks the superiority of the missionary hospitals (particularly the Austrian Hospital in Nazareth), which were the only ones providing medicine.

That same year the whole division was transferred to Ma'an (south of Jordan), and after a week Canaan was sent to Damascus to the headquarters of the army where he got sick and eventually was sent back to Jerusalem to recover. The second time Canaan was sent to the army was through Prof. Muhlens, who had been sent to the desert to offer medical services. Canaan was then sent to Bir Sheba where he organised a laboratory under the supervision of Prof. Hegler. A few months after, he was transferred to another laboratory in Hafir al-Auja. The last position in the Sinai front was Beit Hanoun. After losing the Sinai, Canaan was sent to Damascus and then to Aleppo where he directed the biggest laboratory in the south of the Ottoman territories.[516]

During this period, Canaan got a lot of experience treating wounded soldiers and dealing with all kinds of infections. He was sent to different locations to serve as a doctor in the army, and had to cope with the death and sickness of soldiers, civil population and himself. However, as we read the entry on the War in his diaries we learn that this period was extremely gratifying, because as a doctor he had the chance to save many lives and improve the health of many people. Additionally, he expressed how fruitful this period was in terms of experience and knowledge in the medical field.

Regarding the formation of his identity, this episode in the army must have sparked some conflict in him. He was fighting on the side of the Ottomans, receiving his medicine through the European missionary, while being an Arab. In the entry of the War of his diary, he repeatedly distinguished himself from the Turks, which represented the Ottoman state. Despite being an Ottoman citizen himself, and having recognised in other moments of his life the privileges of the

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[515] T. Canaan, "The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs I", p.24

[516] T. Canaan, The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs I, p. 25

Ottoman citizenship[517], Canaan brings his Arab-ness to the fore. He repeatedly affirmed his identity as an Arab and expressed shared features with other non-Palestinian Arabs. This identification must have come from comparing the Ottoman institutions with the missionary ones and they role during the War. Canaan was critical of the flaws of the Ottoman state constantly expressing the superiority of missionary institutions. By the beginning of the 20th century, the missions had impacted the Jerusalemite population in such an important way, that Canaan not only showed great sympathy for the their work, but also felt part of the culture they had introduced. These institutions contributed to the cosmopolitanism and the modernisation of Jerusalem's society, something that Canaan valued a lot. As we go through his biography, Canaan often mentions the different origins of his acquaintances and close friends, and expresses how the presence of such diverse population played a role in the formation of the urban culture of the city.

Comparing the years he spent in the different posts in the army with the years he acquired his amulets, we see that during the War, he kept collecting amulets. Particular groups of items were acquired during his stays in the Nazareth, Damascus and the Negev Desert. These amulets are part of the group of objects that he acquired directly from patients. Since this is the period when he carried out many medical visits in the countryside, it is when he actually gathered most of the amulets that appear in the catalogue with information about their uses and applications.

5.8.2 Collecting for others

Collections are formed in different ways and with different goals in mind. Collecting material with the purpose of analysing it and eventually writing about it in an academic journal is very different from collecting material with the purpose of exhibiting it. Exhibiting implies conscious choices of what to include and exclude in order to present a particular story to a target audience. For this, the collector must know what this audience is and anticipate what they are looking for.

As mentioned before, Canaan was a well-known physician and ethnographer, and throughout the years he also became known as a collector. The development of his activities in these three fields led him to move in different networks. In the scientific societies discussed above (on medicine and folklore) Canaan was in contact with other scholars, who contributed to his work. As a collector, however, his network grew wider. Not only scholars, but also amateur collectors, and anyone aware of Canaan's interests in collecting, could become part of his collecting enterprise by

[517] This can be exemplified with the time he got married and advised his wife Margot to become an Ottoman subject. Cfr. T. Canaan, The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs I, p.25

giving him an amulet. Many were the contributors to his collection who, knowing about Canaan's interest in folk medicine, were motivated to donate. His collection might have represented something bigger since it raised the interest of many people who were not related neither to the study of folklore nor to the medical field. Some of the donors were involved in the political life of the country, others came from religious backgrounds. Some contributors might have seen Canaan's collection with curiosity, others as an assemblage of elements that formed a national identity. Especially if Canaan openly talked about the reasons why he collected, and that his collection aimed to record what colonisation was wiping out. Following this narrative, his interlocutors, political leaders included, must have been enthusiastic to collaborate in such an enterprise.

Canaan was in contact with other collectors. It has been said that collecting was part of the cultural activities of many scholars of his time. The case of Lydia Eisler and her relation with Canaan is very interesting as discussed in Chapter 3. She was the wife of Adolf Einsler, Canaan's colleague and she was also an amateur collector of Palestine folkloric artefacts. Her collection, described in Chapter 3, contains very similar objects to the Tawfik Canaan Collection. We know that she specifically gathered a group of objects with the intention to present them in the International Hygiene Exhibition that took place in Dresden, Germany in 1911. By this year, Canaan had already begun working as a doctor in the Jerusalem Hospital and had gathered some amulets. However, his collecting activity had not been systematic. He had acquired items during his medical visits in a rather ad hoc manner. As for his research on amulets, he had not published any article on Palestine's folklore yet.

Next to Lydia Einsler's collection, Canaan later contributed to the creation of other collections. By 1932 when he carried out a research stay in London for the study of tropical diseases, Canaan had already established good relations with Henry Wellcome, an American-British pharmaceutical entrepreneur who was also a keen collector of medical artefacts and who requested from Canaan a small collection of Palestinian amulets. In his diaries, Canaan mentions that it was precisely that same year 1932 when his son Beshara (known in England as Theo) started studying at the University of London, and that it had been thanks to the sponsorship and recommendation of Henry Wellcome that the admission process had gone with ease. In the same entry of his diary, Canaan mentions having already sent the 230 amulets to Wellcome's medico-historical museum, a deal that had helped to establish a good relation with him.[518]

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[518] T. Canaan, The Taufiq Canaan Memoirs I, p.29

The research stay in London in 1932 seems to have been very useful. First because it took place the same year Theo moved to London, and I assume that Canaan helped him setting up in his new home. Second, because during this stay Canaan involvement with English researchers granted him a good name in England as well as in Palestine. Canaan says that after this stay the number of patients back in Jerusalem increased, particularly among some of the highest British officials.

During his stay in London, Canaan must have visited the Historical Medical Museum where the objects he had collected were on display. Canaan had customised this small collection. When Henry Wellcome first knew about Canaan's collection of amulets, he tried to purchase it as a whole, but after some failed attempts, he eventually agreed in accepting a smaller collection. It is not clear when and how the relation between Canaan and Wellcome started. It is unknown to me where they met or how they knew about each other. The communication between them took place through a good friend of Mr. Wellcome, who in Canaan diaries appears as Mr. Saint-John, but who may actually have been Peter Johnston-Saint (1866-1947), who worked for Wellcome from the 1920's onwards and whose role was to create and arrange the collections for the Historical Medical Museum.[519] After his career as an officer in the Indian Army and Royal Flying Corps, Johnston-Saint was sent on "collecting tours" and in 1928 became the "full-time roving ambassador for the Museum"[520] Besides being an acquisitions agent, he was a representative of the Museum at international conferences to expand the network. He was in charge of the public relations in the Museum's development, and in 1934 he was appointed Conservator of all the collections. He was not the only person who collected for Wellcome, but he was assigned the Mediterranean, Middle East, Persia and India collections.[521]

Johnston-Saint is a key figure in Canaan's process of collecting. Aware of Canaan's collection of amulets, Johnston-Saint was the one who negotiated with Canaan what kind of objects to include in the small collection for Mr. Wellcome. By the time their communication took place, Canaan's own collection was in the process of formation. Objects collected before 1932 where of various kinds, and these where the ones that Johnston-Saint had as a reference point. Of course Canaan was known as a specialist and was granted the freedom to arrange the material according to

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519 P.J. Johnston-Saint (d.1947) Travel diaries, reports and correspondence related the to work for the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, Reference : WA/HMM/RP/Jst, WA/HMM/CO/Sai https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/N13846539

520 J. Symons. "The development of the Wellcome Collections" in *Newsletter (Museum Ethnographers Group)* No. 20 (Feb.1987) p.12

521 J. Symons. *Op. Cit*. p.12

his own insights, but Johnston-Saint's instructions must have had an impact on Canaan's own collecting practices as well. Canaan sent the 230 objects to England knowing that these would be immediately on display.

The Historical Medical Museum was founded as part of Wellcome's altruist projects. It was inaugurated in London in 1913 apropos of the XVIIth International Congress of Medicine.[522] The development of the collections of the Museum are registered in three handbooks that contain information about the objects in each of the Museum's sections. The handbooks were published in 1913 (year of the Museum's opening), in 1920, and in 1927 after the re-opening of the Museum.

The museographic details registered in these three handbooks show the development of the collections, particularly the creation of new museographic categories, which explains the interest in acquiring material such as the Palestinian amulets from Canaan. The handbook of 1913 mentions eight glass cases containing charms and talismans located in the Gallery of the Hall.[523] Without any specification about their place of provenance, the entire collection of charm and talismans was not big enough to divide it per region. The only two cases grouped under "Egyptian" did not even refer to the geographical area, but to the culture of origin, which by the way occupied a central place in all kinds of collections in late 19th- and early 20th-century Europe. In the handbook of 1920, in comparison, there is an entire section dedicated to folk medicine including charms, talismans and amulets from all parts of the world. With a two-page introduction, this handbook describes what an amulet, charm, and talisman is, plus the different kinds included in the collection. Defined as objects used in every-day traditional prophylactics, amulets are described as objects that prevent or ward off evil influences and diseases, but also cure them[524]. Collecting folk material culture had become among the interest of the Museum by 1920. That was the same year Johnston-Saint began working for the Museum. In my sources it is not certain when the Museum acquired the amulets from Canaan, since they are not catalogued as coming from him, neither is the date of acquisition given. What is important to reflect on, is that the interest of the Museum in folk medicine, and the kinds of objects collected so far might have provided the guidelines of the objects that the Museum wanted from Canaan.

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[522] Opening ceremony of the Historical Medical Museum. https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b24921257

[523] Handbook of the Historical Medical Museum, 1913, p.43

[524] Handbook of the Historical Medical Museum, 1920, p.15



Figure 25. *qā'a kan'ān.* Tawfik Canaan Station, Birzeit University Museum
Photo taken by the author

By 1920, Canaan's own collection was still in the making. So far he had acquired a good number of objects, through his fieldwork in the countryside while being sent to work as an itinerant doctor, as director of the polyclinic of Jerusalem, and as doctor of the Ottoman Army during the First World War. This phase of Canaan's collecting from 1910-1918 included unique objects that his patients used for healing. These objects were not amulets that could be obtained in shops, instead they had been manufactured by local amulet makers or by the patients themselves. The uniqueness of these items and the information that Canaan had acquired from the users must have been

astonishing for Johnston-Saint, and for any one else interested in traditional medicine; and must have been the main reason for requesting a smaller selection.[525]

5.9 Conclusion

The amulets collected by Taufiq Canaan during his life ended up forming one of the most important collections of Palestinian cultural heritage. Nowadays located at Birzeit University Museum, the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets is object of national pride. Some of its items are exhibited permanently at the Library of the University where all members of the university community can see them. The way they have been placed at the entrance of the main library shows the passer-by the value of Taufiq Canaan's works, reminding everyone, specially students, that they —the university/the Palestinians— posses one of the greatest collections of amulets. The exhibited items also remind students that being aware of the political past and being politically active as Canaan was, is a quality that must be cultivated, admired and emulated.

Even though most of the items remain in storage, they are accessible at all times. The staff of the Museum is in charge of granting access to students and researchers interested in Palestine's cultural heritage. To see the amulets one needs to go to a special room called: *qā'at kan'ān* or the Canaan Station, where all the objects are kept in drawers. The amulets share this room with traditional clothes that form the second collection of BZU. Next to the items exhibited at the Library and at the storage room, the access to the amulets has also taken place through larger exhibitions, in which selected items from the Canaan Collection have been incorporated.

The objects that Canaan collected had a life even before becoming collectables. People had been using them, buying and selling them, making them and disposing them, and exchanging them for medical services. However, the load or meaning they got as political signifiers added one more layer to their many existing functions, probably the most visible one. They became representatives of Palestine's indigenous culture, first during Canaan's lifetime and Palestinian national tokens during the "Palestinian awakening" of the 1970s.

The amulets have been catalogued and studied after the *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* exhibition, always in connection to Taufiq Canaan and his ethnographic-medical work. (even when material features

[525] The negotiations between Canaan and Johnston-Saint need more exploration, as well as whether the small collection was sold to the Museum or was just donated. This aspect of the Canaan's collecting could add interesting insights on the commoditisation of amulets as collectibles took place.

are the focus of the approach, they are always analysed in parallel to Canaan's ethnographic work). While Canaan considered his amulets as representatives of a disappearing rural culture, they are clearly connected to urban culture as well. Some amulets were donated to Canaan by acquaintances that lived in Jerusalem and that were part of the Jerusalemite urban middle class and political elite. Other amulets came from peasants who had been forced to settle in the town or that were involved in Jerusalem's trade. Even when amulets came from rural areas, they are connected to Palestine's urban culture inasmuch as they were collected, studied, and given value for being ethnographic data. The idea behind collecting samples of traditional medicine was for Canaan a way to record material culture from a particular reality in Palestine, that of the *fellaḥīn* and bedouin. As we approach his collecting activity and the resulting collection with ethnographic eyes, we discover that it does not only disclose everyday practices among the *fellaḥīn*, but also cultural practices of middle class Jerusalemites interested in Palestine's folklore, and people whose political activity led them to share with Canaan the interest in collecting parts of the land that was being threatened. In this sense, the Palestinian-ness of the collection, I argue, must be understood within the context of its formation, exhibition and reception.

6. Conclusion

In 2017, during one of my fieldwork trips to Palestine, I had the chance to know about Ayman's mother. Ayman was part of the staff at the Museum of BZU and helped me going through the items of the T.C.C.P.A so I could photograph the material I needed for this thesis. During the times we met, and while handling the Canaan amulets made of alum, he told me that his mum uses pieces of alum for fumigations. Alum, as explored in Chapter 2, is widely known for its antiseptic and healing properties. It is used as a disinfecting treatment for shaving wounds. Its purifying properties are also applied in fumigations, in which a piece of alum is burnt and the smoke is used to drive evil spirits away. Ayman's mother has been using alum for decades as an inherited tradition from her mother and grandmother. She strongly believes in the efficacy of alum especially with regard to children, who after all are among the most susceptible to be affected by the evil eye and evil spirits. The procedure of the fumigations that she performs is the following. A piece of alum is put on a plate with ingredients such as black-cumin seeds (*al-qazḥa* or *al-ḥabbat al-saudā'*), and a special kind of flour called *ṭaḥīn al-mawlid.* This flour is called after the recitation of special prayers and exaltations from the tradition of *al-mawlid al-nabawī*, the celebration of Prophet Mohammad's birthday on the 12th of *al-rabī' al-awwal*. The three ingredients are put on a plate and burnt on a kerosene or gas stove. When burnt, a very particular steam and smoke is produced, which is dispersed over the house by walking around with the plate while performing the religious reading of *al-ma'ūdhāt*[526]. The aim is to clean the house from the evil eye and evil spirits, and to counteract any effect or harm that these spirits might have accomplished already in the family. When a child cries too much for no reason, it is believed he has become the object of envy, so the steam/smoke is spread all around him.[527]

The fumigations carried out by Ayman's mother show current forms of protection and healing that incorporate the same materials that were used in the manufacture of amulets in the early 20th century. This continuity should make us reflect on how the Canaan amulets are not isolated in time and space, they are linked to amulets used in previous centuries and amulets used in contemporary practices. The amulets collected by Canaan have been constructed as remnants of a no-longer existing past, as representatives of a traditional medicine that was "replaced" by modern

[526] *al-ma'ūdhāt* refers to the three last auras of the Qur'an.

[527] Information obtained from conversations with Ayman al-Shweiki. (fieldwork interviews, fall 2017)

medicine, and as tokens of Palestine's cultural heritage. However, the logic behind the use of amulets informs popular forms of healing, that are still popular nowadays, thus leading to the conclusion that the Canaan amulets are part of a continuum that tends to be overlooked.

Functioning simultaneously as representatives of the past and as powerful remedies, the Canaan amulets disclose that *objects* are defined historically, socially and culturally. They are constantly redefined by people's engagements with the material world. The way Ayman's mother engages with the alum is different from the way Ayman engages with the alum in the Canaan amulets; for her the alum has the function of a purifying agent, for him alum amulets are ethnographic evidence of the pre-Nakba past and valuable museum objects.

The different forms in which people have engaged with amulets throughout the 20th century, can be seen through exploring the Canaan amulets through their trajectories in times and space. The mixed methodology of this thesis allows to understand that the entanglement of people, objects, places and stories helps to deconstruct the predominant narrative around the *Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets*. It makes it possible to distinguish multiple uses and functions that sometimes overlap making an amulet a very complex object.

Chapter 1 is a reflexive exercise of the category "amulet", the magical load that has been given to it, and the way amulets have been explored in colonial settings. The chapter highlights the imprecision of using the term "amulet" for objects of diverse kinds used in different contexts. In contrast, it suggests the use of *emic* terms, which stand as way they were referred to by the users, collectors, and ethnographers in the early 20th century. One same amulet could be referred to in different ways, disclosing the many and simultaneous forms in which people related to the objects.

In the first half of the 20th century, when Canaan collected his amulets, they were used as a means of protection and healing or for achieving good luck or well-being. However, this thesis has shown that amulets had many simultaneous functions, whereby the "original" medical function was sometimes opaqued by the commercial, political, ethnographic and social functions. In other words, amulets simultaneously participated in commoditisation, politicisation and folklorisation processes between amulet makers, users, merchants, ethnographers and collectors.

Studying the trajectories and circulation of the Canaan amulets, it becomes possible to access the religious, economic, social and cultural developments that took place in Palestine from the late 19th to the late 20th century. In going through the different phases of amulets, Chapter 2 has shown that amulets were ingrained in the medico-religious culture of Palestine, which was predominantly agrarian. It was composed of three main domains, the abode of the saints, the world

of demons, and the natural world. People engaged with elements associated with these three domains in a fluid manner, and amulets resulting from it could be multipurpose/mixed amulets such as the alum-blue bead-*al-mīs* bead amulet. The complexity of everyday religion is also evident in its pragmatic nature. Such as the amulets from Nabi Yaqin (Fig. 14), objects that seemed to be associated to a particular source of power, could be related to other elements (landmarks, saints, stories about the intrinsic powers of their materials) to add to and ensure their efficacy. This pragmatism is also reflected in the way amulets were used by people from different confessions. For them the use of amulets responded to everyday needs, which could be fulfilled in sacred places and through rituals that were beyond any confessional domain.

Since efficacious amulets could restore physical, psychological and social well-being, the demand for these objects was quite high. Chapter 4. has shown that the commoditisation of amulets occurred from the moment they were made. Different instances were involved in the manufacture and circulation of these powerful objects, which challenges any kind of fixed hierarchy. Amulets were made by sheikhs, but also users were capable of making their own amulets by knowing about the intrinsic properties of materials, and ways to infuse power in them. They were made by obtaining them (or parts) in the market, and by activating them in a shrine. Moreover amulets of a particular fame circulated all around Palestine. Merchants moving across the country supplied amulets to the clientele, which gradually included more and more pilgrims, who during pilgrimage, would acquire them to later take them home, pass them on to their relatives, or sell them.

The circulation of amulets cannot be completely understood without considering the role of ethnographers and collectors. Chapter 3. has shown that next to their circulation and use as healing objects, amulets became subject to ethnographic interest. This phase in the amulets' life sheds light on a large part of how Jerusalem's urban culture developed, and the economic relations that the city kept with the surrounding villages. It for example shows how through the establishment of schools, archaeological research institutes and hospitals, missions shaped much of the urban bourgeoisie's culture. Members of this social class eventually contributed to the study of Palestine's folklore and formed collections that remained in Palestine, or were sent abroad. This phase also shows how, although amulets had always operated in commercial contexts, the trade of amulets as part of holy souvenirs increased in the 19th century with the masses of visitors frequenting the sites in Palestine. Once amulets turned into souvenirs and ethnographic evidence, they were given value for their uniqueness and their collectibility. The commoditisation of amulets acquired a new dimension in which people who had only used amulets as healing remedies, entered the networks in which

amulets could be commoditised as collectibles. Users bought amulets not only for their own consumption, but in order to sell them on to make a profit. In such cases the healing power did not longer formed the main interest of the buyers. Merchants specialised their trade according to the demand of the clients, and antiquarians, such as Ohan, offered products in shops for collectors. The phase of the amulets as ethnographic data and collectables also shows the relations that the urban bourgeoisie established with the rural areas through the medical practice and fieldwork carried out by anthropologists. Encounters between physicians, ethnographers, archaeologists, and common people disclose that users of amulets negotiated with the doctors to keep their healing objects. This phase of amulets as ethnographic data is not limited to the time of Canaan. Even when the Canaan amulets were made public again in the 1990's, and entered a phase of politicisation, they kept their status as ethnographic data.

Chapter 5 has shown how the Canaan amulets acquired a political meaning in the 1990's. Starting with the time they were donated to BZU and later during the exhibition *Ya kafi, Ya shaft*, the Canaan amulets were presented as part of the national cultural heritage. Originally coming from a peasant culture that was considered backwards by Canaan and other collectors in the time they were collected, the amulets are now considered by all Palestinians part of their culture. Through the conceptualisation of the *fallāḥ* as a national hero, Palestinians had embodied such a hero and have strengthen their connexion with the land. The chapter has also highlighted that besides their symbolic meaning as representatives of the peasant culture, the amulets had strong ties to elite/ learned, modern urban culture. Indeed, Canaan and other urbanite contemporaries of his, played an important role in recording and safeguarding elements of Palestinian culture. They were among the first who became politically active and raise awareness of the threat that Palestine was under. It is precisely during Canaan's collecting activity that the Palestinian-ness of the amulets started to take shape. This layer/phase of the amulets as tokens of Palestine's national culture overlap with their phases as collectibles and ethnographic data. Once the amulets became part of BZU collections they have not been able to circulate as commodities or as healing objects anymore. However, as museum objects they have a latent quality to enter a commoditisation process again.

Canaan's amulets for all their particularities in the Palestinian context of the 19th and 20th centuries, offer insights that can be applied to the understanding of amulets and collections in other contexts. Studying amulets in collections in this way, offers a more comprehensive approach based on the the premise that they are dynamic objects, and that the museum —where we see them now— is just one more setting in their life as objects. It is a combination of historical and anthropological

research, in which the understanding of the objects takes place in their relation to their human, material and social environment through a period of time.

Although this thesis has explored Palestinian amulets through particular case of the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets, the approach to the objects can very well apply to all amulets in collections in general. As for the processes and historical conditions, the development of ethnographic research, archaeological interest, the missionary culture and the agrarian culture, can explain many other cases of Levantine material culture. This thesis has selected particular items to exemplify aspects of the life of the Canaan amulets. The Collection is so vast that what remains to be done is a more detailed study of the material; an exploration of the life of each item.

Reflecting on the main research question: what different uses and functions did the objects in the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets have during their lifetime? This thesis has found out that by exploring the amulets in a sort of biographical way, in different moments of time and settings, it is possible to see that their use and functions have been impacted by their historical context including: everyday religiosity, colonisation, collecting processes, commercial exploitation, and nationalism. The Canaan amulets that are nowadays presented as Palestinian amulets, retain qualities from the phases they have been through. Once used as healing and protective means, commodities, ethnographic data, museum objects, collectibles, the amulets continue to be part of a continuum of process of contextualisation.

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Photo taken from Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treachery_of_Images

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Figure 11. Khalīlī glass eyes of different sizes (see size in relation to the tag): no. 382 *'ayn al-dīk* or rooster eye and no. 388 *'ayn al-jamal* or camel eye. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photos taken by the author*

Figure 12. Stones used as amulets. (*ḥajar or khirza ḥalīb, khirza kabās, etc.)* Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets.. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 13. *ḥajar mūsā* with inscription on both sides. Catalogue no. 181, Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 14. Bead/alum/*al-mīs* amulet. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 15. Bead/alum/*al-mīs* amulets of new fabrication, rags, glass beads, and soil from the tomb of Prophet Yaqin. Catalogue no. 1029, Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 16. Amulet made of tin. Catalogued no. 186. The inscription reads: 1689? before Christ, anything obtained in a tomb prolongs life and keeps the *qarīna* away. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 17. Stamped pilgrimage certificate. Catalogue no. 942, Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 18. Seals used to stamp certificates and elaborate talismans. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 19. Recreation of a bedouin *'aṭṭarīn.* Joe Alon Centre, The Museum of Bedouin Culture *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 20. Bracelet made of coral from the Red Sear. Bedouin manufacture. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author.*

Figure 21. Paper amulet in amulet case. Sold in Jerusalem and Nabi Musa. Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. *Photo taken by the author*

Figure 22. Arm amulet made of copper. Bought in Ohan's shop in 1940 for 350 mils. *Photo credit: Birzeit University Museum*

Figure 23. Arm amulet with inscribed stones. Bought in Ohan's shop in 1940 for 500 mils. *Photo credit: Birzeit University Museum*

Figure 24. Cover of the catalogue from the exhibition *Ya kafi, Ya shafi… The Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets. (An Exhibition). Photo taken by the author*

Figure 25. *qā'a kan'ān.* Tawfik Canaan Station, Birzeit University Museum. *Photo taken by the author*

Appendix B. Tables

Table 1. Complete list of materials/ amulets in the T.C.C.P.A.

This table is a complete list of *emic* terms and their English translation of the amulets in the T.C.C.P.A. Taufiq Canaan registered the amulets after the common name used amongst the people. Most of the amulets' names are based on the materials they were made of, such as "orange seeds". Other names refer to the function, such as "luck bead", a few amulets refer to the shape, such as "pea bead", or to the place of origin, such as "Musa stone". Every term comes with a few examples from the catalogue, and the way they were used.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
اذن حمار	*udhun ḥimār*	donkey ear (kalanchoe gastonis-bonnieri)	1013	Attached to a child' cap, against the *qarīna*
انجاصة مصنوعة من كناسة الجامع	*injāṣa (kunāsat al-jām'i)*	pear (made of the sweepings from the Mosque)	1009, 1012	Medina Mosque/Tomb of Prophet Muhammad
كرات بخور	*kurāt bukhūr*	incense balls	997, 998, 999, 1000, 1001	The spheres/balls have sacred iconography. Sacralised by putting them in contact with the Holy Sepulchre. To cure sick children, incense is put inside them and burnt
بذرة برتقال	*badhra burtuqāl*	orange seeds	816	The seeds were attached to the cap of a child, against the jinn
بذرة بطيخ	*badhra baṭīkh*	watermelon seeds	279, 1420	Used in combination with other materials such as alum. Used against the *qarīna.*
بذرة خوخ	*badhra khūkh*	plum seed	812, 813, 817	Used attached to the cap or hung in a chain, to prolog life.
بذرة عشب الرتم	*badhra 'ashab al-ratam*	seeds of *retama* herb	848-851	Used among bedouins again the jinn
بذرة ليمون	*badhra laimūn*	lemon seeds	310	Used in combination with other materials such as a medallion, a piece of garlic and a pea bead. It was attached to the cap (of a child?)
برشام /برشان	*barshām/ barshān*	parchment	286	Through the inscription on it.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
براعم رمان	*barā'im rumān*	pomegranate blossoms	809, 819	Pierced and woven as a necklace with a metal thread. Used to cure diarrhoea and dysentery.
بلور	*billaur*	crystal	1300	Manufacture of trays with Our'anic inscriptions
بورسلان	*būrsilān*	porcelain (pendant)	20	Used to manufacture pendants with inscriptions
بيت سلحفاة	*bait sulḥafā*	turtle shell	866, 1132	Attached to the baby's cradle, against the *qarīna* and the jinn.
بيضة	*baiḍa*	egg	838	Written on it. It had to be boiled and eaten. Against fever.
تراب	*turāb*	dust/soil	285, 1009, 1012	Sweepings of a shrine or soil from a holy site
تنك	*tink*	tin plate	81, 83, 84, 85, 186	The power derives from the place of origin. No. 186 was obtained in a tomb to prolong life and against the *qarīna*
التوتياء	*al-tūtiyā'*	zinc	21, 217	Used in the manufacture of pendants. The power came from the inscription on the pendants or by the sound produced by the dandusha-s attached.
تمرة	*tamra*	date	1014, 1041, 1340	From Mecca. Given to babies to suck the juice and develop a good language and a beautiful voice.
ثوم	*thūm*	garlic	305, 374, 376, 1046	Used in combination with blue beads, agains envious eye and to cure sty.
جرس	*jaras*	bell	146, 198, 199	Used for the sound, it drives evil spirits away
جلد	*jild*	leather	619, 832, 892, 1077, 1463	Mainly used in the manufacture of pouches to protect paper amulets.
حب بركة	*ḥabb baraka*	black-cumin seeds	285, 290	Against evil eye
حب حرمل	*ḥabb ḥarmil*	*A*frican rue seeds *(peganum harmal)*	1024	Put in a pouch and carried to get protection against the jinn
حب شعير	*ḥabb sha'īr*	barley seeds	905	Used for fumigations in combination with other herbs, seeds, and written talismans
حبر ملون	*ḥibr*	inks	878	Used different colours in all amulets with text on paper.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
حجر من الحرم الشريف	*ḥajar min al-ḥaram al-sharīf*	stone from Temple Mount	589	Powerful in connection with the place of origin and Sheikh Ibrahim al-Dhanaf (custodian of Temple Mount) against jaundice, has to be hung by children. a bit is dissolved in water and drunk
حجر جيري (من مغارة الحلیب)	*ḥajar jīrī (min maghārat al-ḥalīb)*	limestone (Milk Grotto)	994, 995, 996	From the Milk Grotto/ used by women to boost milk during lactation
حجر احمر	*ḥajar aḥmar*	red stone	115, 194, 495, 567	In the shape of a heart to be hung on the neck of the children, against stomach ache and anemia. Also used against haemorrhage, envious eye and the jinn.
حجر اخضر	*ḥajar akhḍar*	green stone (jade?)	614, 1480	Against gallbladder .enlargement
حجر اسود	*ḥajar aswad*	black stone (onix?)	193, 1390	against evil eye
حجر حديد	*ḥajar ḥadīd*	lodestone	257	To counteract magic and expel the jinn.
حجر راس قلب	*ḥajar rās qalb*	head-heart stone	502-508, 510-513, 515, 516, 517, 518, 520-522, 524, 532, 533, 535	Stone used by Christians, rarely worn by Muslim against stomach ache 506. Is made of glass, can be used as *hajar ras qalb* or as *khirzat nafs*
حجر دم	*ḥajar damm*	heliotrope (kind of agate)	196, 581, 608, 613, 581, 585, 920, 1291	Used to control nose bleeding, it must be pressed against the forehead.
حجر زرقاء	*ḥajar zarqā'*	blue stone (lapis)	461	Used like a blue bead, against evil eye.
حجر فيروز	*ḥajar fairūz*	blue turquoise	1339	From Mecca, the stone was set on a ring. Used against envious eye.
حجر موسى	*ḥajar mūsā*	Musa stone	178, 179, 181, 185, 187, 188, 190, 191, 197, 1090, 1091,, 1124, 1281,1334, 1335, 1441	Powerful in relation to the shrine of Nabi Musa. Triangular-shape inscribed stones used alone or set in a piece of jewellery with *dandusha-s* and blue beads. against envious eye.
حجر يشب	*ḥajar yashb*	jade	1272	Set on a ring. The power derives from the inscription on it.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
حجر يشب احمر	*ḥajar yashb aḥmar*	red jade	1304, 1341	Used in combination with dandusha-s. Hung on the back or on the ear. Its power derive from their place of origin. No. 1341 comes from Mecca, used against hatred and anger.
حجر يشب رديء	*ḥajar yashb radī'*	jasper	1338	From Mecca with the inscription of the *shahada*
حجر عرق اللؤلؤ	*ḥajar 'irq al-lu'lu'*	nacreous stone	468, 514, 1282	Material to manufacture hands and amulets of other shapes such as crosses, hearts. Used in combination with *dandusha-s*.
حجر عقيق	*ḥajar 'aqīq*	agate stone	183, 513	The power derives from the inscription on the stone. Used as a pendant. This kind of stone could be used for the *ḥajar ras qalb*, and *khirzat kabbās*
حديد	*ḥadīd*	iron	184, 236, 248, 734	To break magic (work), used to cure haemorrhage, to prevent miscarriage and against the jinn.
حدوة حصان	*ḥidwa ḥiṣān*	horseshoe	239, 1411	To liberate someone under siḥr/ used by pregnant women to prevent miscarriage.
حرز الانذرون	*ḥirz al-andhrūn*	talisman of Andhrun	1075,1408	Printed talisman. It tells the story of the talisman used by Andhrun under the crown, giving him power.
حرز الجوشن	*ḥirz al-jawshan*	amulet of al-jawshan	930, 931, 1259,1410,	A protective amulet that is referred as a shield. It was name after one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad.
حرز دعاء عكاشة	*ḥirz du'ā' 'ukāsha*	supplication to 'ukāsha	912, 1258	In connexion to 'Ukash, one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad.
حرز الغاسلة	*ḥirz al-ghāsila*	amulet of the washerwoman	960, 1076	This paper amulet is powerful in connexion to the story on it about the washerwoman, Murjāne and the caliph Harun al-Rashid. Used for love and acceptance
حرز دعاء القديسة تريزيا	*ḥirz du'ā' al-qiddīsa tirīziā*	supplication to Saint Teresa	928	Its power comes from its connexion with the saint.
حرز دعاء عبد الله ابن سلطان	*ḥirz du'ā' 'abd allah ibn ṣulṭān*	supplication to Abdallah bin Sultan	929	Powerful in connection with this *walī.*

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
حنجرة الذئب	*ḥanjarat al-dhi'b*	wolf throat	805	Wolf bone (vertebra). Used against cough and respiratory problems. It is hung around the neck of the patient. This item comes from the shrine of Prophet Samuel.
حنك ديب	*ḥanak dhīb*	wolf palate	803	Pierced and set on a chain to be hung around the neck.
حنك قنفذ	*ḥanak qunfudh*	porcupine palate	798, 799	(probably also pierced and set on a chain to be hung around the neck) Against the *qarīna* and the jinn
خبز مقدس	*khubz muqaddas*	blessed bread loaf	1015, 1400	Blessed in particular holy days of the year (Ramadan, Aid al-Khadr, during Mass)
خرزة من الزجاج	*khirza min al-zujāj*	glass bead	317	If the color is white, it is another version of the milk beads. Used alone or in combination with other materials.
خرزة بخت	*khirzat bakht*	luck bead	1146	To bring good luck
خرزة بزلة	*khirzat bazilla*	pea bead	305, 374, 375, 571, 572, 587 1374	Mostly used to cure sty (*shaḥḥād al-'ayn*). In combination with other materials such as garlic, blue beads and coins, against evil eye, evil spirits.
خرزة حليب	*khirzat ḥalīb*	milk bead	317, 324, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1150	Bead made of white glass, long or round, it is hung around the neck to boost mothers milk. The power comes from the connexion to the Milk Grotto.
خرزة الحلمات	*khirzat al-ḥalamāt*	nipple bead	593	Against cracking of nipples
خرزة ريح العصبي	*khirzat rīḥ al-'uṣbā*	nervous system bead	592	To treat problems related to nervous system??
خرزة زرقاء	*khirzat zarqā'*	blue beads	94, 108, 118, 119, 121, 217, 218, 341, 342, 344, 363, 364, 367, 490, 491, 492	Against the qarīna, the envious eye. Attached to the cap of children. Also used hung on the neck of animals and on vehicles. Many times, it appears in combination with other materials.
خرزة السحر	*khirzat al-siḥr*	magic bead	595	Against siḥr (magic)
خرزة السوداء	*khirzat al-saudā'*	melancholy bead	418, 584, 590, 600, 604-607	To treat depression, melancholy and schizophrenia
خرزة عقرب	*khirzat 'aqrab*	scorpion bead	610, 611	Against scorpion sting. The bead is put in water and then only the water is drunk.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
خرزة/حجر عنبر	*khirzat /ḥajar ‘anbar*	amber bead/ stone	157, 318-319, 397, 555, 666, etc..	Used against jaundice and anaemia. It is scrapped off, the powder is stirred in water. The water is drunk. Sometimes the amber is combined with other amulets in an amulet.
خرزة عين الهر	*khirzat ‘ayn al-hirr*	cat-eye bead	331, 1261, 496, 498, 499, 500	This kind of bead can be black or white. Used for love, by a woman whose husband do not love her anymore. Used among bedouin women
خرزة النفس/ حجر النفس	*khirzat al-nafs/ ḥajar al-nafs*	spirit bead/ spirit stone	195, 304, 309, 311, 312, 314, 315, 316, 377, 536-554, 577, 578, 582, 583, 1340, 1443	Used against diseases caused by *al-nafs al-sharīra* (evil spirits). It can be round, oval or elongated bead. Most are bluish white, or dark coloured, brown or yellow. It is hung in the neck for protection. For kids and nursing babies. they are put in water, the water is drunk or used for washing. Some were obtained in Mecca.
خرزة كباس (عقيق اخضر معكب	*khirzat kabbās*	press/pressure bead (cubic green agate)	1363	Against high blood pressure, it’s hung in the neck of sick people, newborn babies and women confined in childbed.
خرزة لبة	*khirzat labba*	kernel bead	220	Used in combination with other materials. To protect against the jinn. It was threaded into a wool thread and used as ornament.
خرزة المرارة	*khirzat al-marāra*	gallbladder bead	594	Used for illnesses of the gallbladder. Put in water, which is later drunk by the patient.
خشب زيتون من الجثمانية	*khashab zaytūn min al-jithmāniya*	olive wood from the Gethsemane	1286	Powerful from the tree of origin/ and place or origin. The wood is decorated with crosses.
خيط اسود	*khaiṭ aswad*	black thread	1266	Tied around the baby’s belly to keep his stomach well while he sleeps on his stomach.
درع	*dir‘*	armor plate	255, 1040	To protect from the envious eye and the jinn. Attached to the cap of a child. It can have a triangular shape and contain *dandusha-s* and bells.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
دندوشة	*dandūsha*	hanging part of an amulet	420, 1359, 1360	It appears in most amulets. Used against evil/envious eye and the *qarīna.* It works through the sound it produces when shaken, the sound drives evil spirits away.
ذهب	*dhahab*	gold	1, 2, 124, 125, 212, 441, 1101, 1111, 1284	The material appears in coins and inscribed pendants.
ذيل قطة	*dhīl qiṭṭa*	cat tail	1413	It was attached to a child's cap, against *al-qarīna*.
رصاص	*raṣāṣ*	lead	788, 1028	The lead is put on fire. Used during vaporisations to identify the person with the envious eye.
زئبق	*zi'baq*	mercury	282	Used in combination with other materials
زجاج	*zujāj*	glass	385, 1439	Material used in the manufacture of beads against the envious eye/ manufactured in Hebron.
زر	*zirr*	button	321, 323, 327	Attached to the cap of children, used as a bell (probably to drive evil spirits aways).
ازهار مجففة	*azhār mujaffa*	dried flowers	1023	Taken at Palm Sunday, the flowers are carried in the church with palms. Burnt, the smoke is spread on sick people and animals to cure them.
سذابية	*sadhābiya*	rue	1017	It is attached to the cap of the children to protect them from evil eye. The shape of the rue spray resembles a hand with five fingers (*khamsa*)
سعف نخيل	*sa'af nakhīl*	palm leaves	292, 329	Taken from the Palm Sunday. The branches were attached to the cap of a child.
سن ذئب	*sinn dhi'b*	wolf fang	2, 335, 781	In combination with blue beads and a bell it was meant to protect a child

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
شبة	*shabba*	alum	278, 279, 288, 339, 369, 370, 397, 415, 416, 421, 422, 423, 424, 428, 429, 487 1412	Used in combination with other materials such as blue beads, sea shells, amber, al-mīs wood. Sometimes it is contained in an amulet pouch, or resembles a small pyramid covered by beads and coral. Against the envious eye. It is sometimes carried, or burnt and used in fumigations.
هرم شبة	*haram shabba*	alum pyramids (covered by small beads)	424-427	Intrinsic properties of the alum/ in combination with the sound produced by the dandusha with hanging coins Used for the children, but also for vehicles and animals.
غصن شجرة عناب	*ghuṣn shajarat ʻunnāb*	twig of jujube tree	1088	the twigs come from the trees that grow in j*awrat al-ʻunnāb* in Jerusalem. Used attached to the clothes to cure swelling or inflammation
شجرة الميس	*shajarat al-mīs*	*celtis australis* tree	1111, 1113, 1114	The power of the wood derives from the location of the tree, most come from Temple Mount. The wood is used in twigs and beads. Beads are combined with other materials and attached to the clothes or hung.
شهادة الحج/الزيارة	*shahādat al-ḥajj/ al-ziyāra*	pilgrimage certificate	942- 948	Paper certificates used in connexion to the holy sites Jerusalem, Hebron, and their associated *mazārāt.* Used as an amulet by folding it and carrying it around, or to protect the household of the pilgrim by hanging it on the wall.
صابون	*ṣābūn*	soap	1002-1008, 1057-1059, 1393-1398	Stamped soap bars with the image of holy places, the Holy Sepulchre, The Dome of the Rock, and other iconography. The soap is activated by putting in contact with the holy sites and then used hung on the bed of the sick child or to wash him.
صدف	*ṣadaf*	pearl oyster, sea shell	320, 339, 431, 778, 1037	Used to protect children from the *qarīna* and the jinn. Used in combination with other materials.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
صدف ودع	*ṣadaf wad‘*	cowrie shell	220, 223, 235, 320, 431, 432, 433	Used against evil and the jinn. Part of bigger amuletic jewellery, in combination with beads and dandusha-s.
صلاة	*ṣalāt*	prayer (written)	278, 1044	The written prayer to Mar Kabryanos is used as a talisman in combination with other materials such as alum
طاحونة	*ṭāḥūna*	mill? (hemispherical stone)	586, 1142, 1344	Part of an amulet. It can be used alone or in combination with other materials. Used against jinn, love and acceptance
طاسة رجفة/ كاسة رجفة	*ṭāsat rajfa/ kāsat rajfa*	fear cup/ bowl	985, 986, 979, 988, 989, 1276, 1476, 1479	Made of metal. Its power come from the inscriptions, and the dandusha-s attached to it. Used for liquid remedies.
عرق اللؤلؤ	*‘irq al-lu’lu’*	nacre shell	468, 514, 1358b	Material used in the manufacture of diverse amulets, in the shape of a *khamsa* or a heart.
عقد	*‘aqd*	knotting, tying	247, 326	Refers to a rag that has been tied, against the *qarīna*
عظمة	*‘aẓma*	bone	782, 835, 913, 1351	When it is a scapula, the bone is inscribed, then cooked in a soup, which is drunk by the patient. Against the *qarīna.* Bone was also used to make beads and used in combination with other materials.
عظمة لوح الكتف لخروف	*‘aẓmat lawḥ al-katf likhurūf*	sheep scapula	835, 836, 1053	Inscribed bone that has to be burnt and hung from an olive tree. Against facial paralysis. To cure other ailments, the bone was cooked and the soup ingested.
عملات	*‘umlāt*	coins	2, 52, 128, 134, 208, 587, 993, etc..	In combination with other materials to manufacture amulets that hang around the neck or have to be attached to the clothes. Against evil eye.
عود الصليب	*‘ūd al-ṣalīb*	wood from the holy cross	268, 269	Powerful in connection to the Holy Cross and Jesus.
عود ميس	*‘ūd mīs*	wood from the mīs tree	370, 416, 810, 814, 815, 818, 821, 826	the twigs of this wood are pierced and hung around the neck or on the head. The wood is also used in the manufacture of beads.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
عورة او عين عمياء	*‘aura / ‘ayn ‘amyā’*	eye-shaped glass bead without pupil	384, 390, 391, 404, 405, 406, 414	According to Canaan, it has no power due to the lack of rings/concentric circles/ pupils.
عين جمل	*‘ayn jamal*	camel eye	386, 387, 388, 407	The eye beads are set in a bracelet of necklace. Used against evil eye. Their power can be sometimes related to the Ibrahimi Mosque.
عين الديك او عين العفريت	*‘ayn al-dīk / ‘ayn al-‘ifrīt*	rooster eye/ demon eye	379 - 382	The eye beads are set in a bracelet of necklace. Used against evil eye. Their power can be sometimes related to the Ibrahimi Mosque.
عين القاعود	*‘ayn al-qā’ūd*	qa’ud (arabic camel) eye	410, 411, 412	The eye beads are set in a bracelet of necklace. Used against evil eye. Their power can be sometimes related to the Ibrahimi Mosque.
عين بقرة مجففة (فاكهة)	*‘ayn baqra mujafafa*	dry ‘ayn baqra (fruit)	783, 786	Used to protect children from the evil/envious eye.
عين الهر	*‘ayn al-harr*	tiger’s eye (chatoyant stone)	116, 331, 569, 1357	Used for love and 116 acceptance, used by women whose husbands do not want .them anymore
فأس	*fās*	axe	1364	Made of copper with the sides in the shape of crescents. Used by a sheikh to touch the affected body part of his client.
فضة	*fiḍa*	silver	1, 2, 3, 5, 1103, 1105, etc..	Silver appears in coins, pendants and pieces of jewellery such as the amulets containers. The power of silver parts in amulets come from the inscriptions or from the combination of materials.
فلفل	*filfil*	pepper	285, 340	In combination with cloves and other beads, against jinn and envious eye.
فنجان قهوة بفضة وعنبر	*finjān qahwa*	coffee mug	1362	Used like a fear cup/bowl. At the bottom of the mug, there is a piece of amber. The talismanic water is put inside the mug and the *masḥūr* patient drinks it. Many drink their coffee in it.
القرآن الكامل	*al-qur’ān al-kāmil*	a complete musḥaf (Qur’an)	100, 1265	It is carried as an amulet due to its small size.
فروة قنفذ	*farwa qunfudh*	porcupine fur	1035	Hung on the bed of the child to protect him from the *qarīna* and evil spirits.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
قدح	*qidḥ*	arrow	253	Made of iron, to break (a spell), against jinn. It was hung on a chain with other amulets.
حب قرنفل	*qaranful*	cloves	340, 344, 820, 867	Used alone, pierced and set in a necklace. Used in combination with other materials. Sometimes carried inside a pouch. The power comes from the smell of the cloves. Used against the *qarīna.*
قرن الحتيت او قرن الوعل	*qarn al-ḥatīt/ qarn al-wa'l*	herb ferula assa-foetida	779, 1093, 1275	Used as a remedy for snake bite/ poisoning. It is crushed in milk and drunk. medical applications
قرن النمل	*qarn al-naml*	scarab horn	789	Used against the *qarīna*
قرن تيس	*qarn tais*	billy goat horn	1297	Used in the manufacture of crosses used as pendants.
قرن عنزة	*qarn 'anza*	goat horn	1298	Used in the manufacture of crosses used as pendants.
قزحة	*qizḥa*	crushed nigella seed	285, 290	Used in combination with paper amulets and other seeds. Against evil eye.
قشرة الخميس	*qishrat al-khamīs*	mix of peel of mahlab seeds and blessed palm leaves. Obtained on Maundy Thursday	1016, 1025	The mixture is blessed in the church during Palm Sunday, submerged in the water that the Roman Patriarch has used to wash the feet of the bishops, and placed in contact with the pulpit where the gospel is read. The mixture is kept at home to fumigate the sick, to drive the jinn away and to protect from evil eye.
قشرة حامض مجففة	*qishrat ḥāmiḍ mujafafa*	dried citrus fruit peel	1036	Against the jinn and the *qarīna*. Hung on the bed of a child.
قشرة بيض	*qishrat baiḍ*	egg shell	892	Used inside an amulet pouch with a written talisman.
قطران	*qiṭrān*	tar	55, 62, 124, 887	Used against respiratory problems
قماش	*qumāsh*	fabric	273	Used for amulet pouches. Used in rags against headache, the piece of fabric with the talismanic inscription is sawn to the cap.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
طلسم مهترئ (ممكن قماش)	*ṭilsam muhtari'*	talisman torn to rags	274	Tied to the right arm when travelling at night, against jinn. Used to cure someone ill, by reading it aloud.
كحل	*kuḥl*	antimony powder	1129	Kohl container with dandusha-s and blue beads
كف مريم او شجرة مريم	*kaff maryam/ shajarat maryam*	rose of Jericho (*anastatica hierochuntica*)	1087	The water used to make the rose bloom again, is given to the sick
كف سذابية	*kaff sadhābiya*	twig of ruta graveolens	1017	This twig has 5 leaves, and is cut because it resembles a hand. It is used as a symbol of the *khamsa* to get protection against the evil eye.
لفافة	*lifāfa*	scroll	902, 907, 1032, 1377	They are powerful amulets in connection with the inscription on them. Used to protect against evil. 907 was made by a sheikh.
مخلب اسد	*mikhlab asad*	claw	128, 795, 797, 1367	Against the jinn
مسبحة	*masbaḥa*	rosary	846, 847	From Mecca/ during pilgrimage it's put in contact with the Kaaba; then hung in the women's neck during birth or on the sick person.
مسكة	*maska/ maskeh*	pendant	4,5, 14, 15, 22	Generic term for pendants made of different materials
مرجان	*marjān*	coral	2, 130, 233, 435, 438, 442	Used as ornament but also against haemorrhage, and to protect from the envious eye and the jinn.
مراية	*mirāya*	mirror	1116	Old mirror of Indian manufacture. In case of epilepsy and convulsions, the mirror is placed in front of the face of the patient.
منقار شنار	*minfār shunnār*	beak shunnār (kind of bird)	785	Used to make children walk sooner
ميدالية	*mīdālia*	medalion	336	In combination with Ottoman coins, and blue beads this Christian medallion was used to mislead the qarīna
ناب خنزير بري	*nāb khanzīr barrī*	boar fang	251, 822, 1373	Resembles a crescent. Hung on animals for protection.
نجمة	*najma*	star	1318	Shape of a pendant with the names of *ahl al-kahf,* or iconography.

name of amulet/ material in Arabic	name of amulet/ material in Romanised Arabic	name amulet/ material in English	amulet no. in the catalogue	origin of power/ activation/ form of use
نحاس	*nuḥās*	copper	24, 39, 137, 201, etc.	Common material used in amuletic jewellery. Combined with other materials/components of amulet.
نسخة مصورة لرسالة النبي الى المقوقس عظيم الغيط	*nuskha musawara li risālat al-nabī ilā al-muqawqis*	illustrated copy of the Prophet Muhammad's letter to al Muqawqis	941	Muslim amulet to be hung in the house.. It contains the family tree of the Prophet. Powerful in connection to Prophet Muhammad and his family.
نسخة من شموس الانوار	*nuskha min shumūs al-anwār*	copy of Shumūs al-anwār	940	Hung in the wall to protect the household.
ورق بكتابة قرانية	*waraq bikitāba qur'āniya*	sheet with qur'anic inscription	270, 271, 272, 276	Powerful in connection to the .Qur'an
ورق زيتون	*waraq zaytūn*	olive leaf	1301	Powerful in connexion to the place of origin. Used as a remedy with the recitation of a prayer, the picture of Jesus Christ.
ورق نشاف	*waraq nashāf*	blotting paper	489	Triangular shape, used in combination with blue beads, to attract and repel attention.
ورق من شجرة الحياة	*waraq min shajarat al-ḥayā*	leaf from the tree of life	1046	Used in combination with garlic. Hung on the bed of a newborn baby for protection.
طلسم ورقي	*ṭilasm waraqī*	paper talisman	275	used by children against hiccups and choke. it is rolled in a napkin, and then put inside a container made of fabric. Other paper talismans target different ailments. Their power derives from what is written on.
يد	*yad*	hand	305, 307, 308, 480-486	Manufactured in diverse materials to counteract the evil eye.

Table 2. Amulets collected per year

This table shows the objects collected per year. Canaan did not register the year of acquisition for all amulets, so this table does not contain all the items in the collection. It is possible to see that Canaan gathered most of his amulets from 1912 to 1920, which corresponds to the years he worked as itinerant doctor and treated patients in the countryside.

Year	amulet number in the catalogue
1910	788, 876, 882, 893, 902,
1911	871, 872, 1020,
1912	1, 4, 129, 157, 178, 246, 247, 270, 271, 282, 289, 293, 296, 376, 471-475, 778, 779, 783, 796, 797, 805, 806, 819, 820, 821, 835, 836, 839, 843, 870, 890, 940, 944, 951, 954, 955, 956, 960, 986, 1014, 1026, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1088,
1913	2, 9, 18, 27, 31, 52, 59, 62, 64, 95, 98, 108, 135, 136, 158, 169, 181, 182, 213, 242, 274, 275, 278, 281, 292, 297, 332, 335, 336, 375, 377, 524, 590-607, 617-631, 769, 770, 776, 793, 794, 795, 798, 799, 810, 837, 838, 879, 880, 881, 885, 891, 895, 904, 914, 942, 946, 952, 953, 957, 959, 980, 981, 1015, 1027, 1028, 1039, 1065, 1068, 1070, 1083,
1914	3, 11, 12, 19, 20, 25, 32, 76, 94, 101, 102, 103, 133, 134, 137, 139, 151, 163, 166, 177, 179, 185, 191, 218, 219, 220, 255, 276, 283, 295, 303, 589, 782, 784, 786, 804, 815, 816, 842, 848-851, 886, 889, 894, 897, 1016, 1018, 1038, 1067, 1074,
1915	63, 66, 82, 83, 91, 92, 131, 159, 236, 254, 273, 286, 324, 330, 493, 771, 773, 780, 785, 790, 791, 803, 809, 827, 906, 908, 916, 979, 1046, 1069,
1916	5, 15, 17, 21, 47, 48, 55, 65, 71, 72, 73, 78, 88, 89, 121, 285, 301, 331, 333, 781, 787, 802, 847, 899, 907, 909, 982, 1017, 1030
1917	13, 22, 36, 53, 67, 84, 90, 96, 120, 126, 130, 138, 145, 152, 154, 162, 165, 170, 183, 186, 193, 198, 205, 206, 214, 243, 245, 288, 290, 291, 520, 694, 814, 826, 833, 888, 911, 1073, 1127,
1918	14, 16, 45, 54, 70, 80, 122, 171, 172, 180, 378, 582, 583, 634, 636, 638, 639, 640, 642, 645, 647 -660, 662-675, 677, 679-690, 692, 695-711, 713-722, 725, 726, 729-732, 775, 991, 1132,
1919	6, 38, 119, 124, 175, 187, 196, 199, 204, 217, 251, 272, 280, 525, 832, 1075, 1126, 1128,
1920	10, 33, 34, 105, 127, 160, 161, 164, 174, 203, 223, 248, 252, 279, 646, 712, 812, 813, 828, 896, 983, 988, 1066, 1071, 1077, 1124, 1129,
1921	46, 87, 93, 200, 287, 635, 777,
1922	7, 24, 60, 128, 146, 149, 167, 176, 184, 250, 257, 302, 691, 693, 834, 941, 1080, 1081, 1086, 1130,
1923	125, 142, 173, 188, 227, 1029, 1096,
1924	23, 507, 1082,
1925	77, 79, 190, 197, 637, 641, 676, 723, 727, 774, 958, 1111, 1113, 1114,
1926	100, 329, 984,
1927	239, 1116,
1928	81, 221, 225,
1929	57, 85, 168, 235, 328, 661,

Year	amulet number in the catalogue
1930	86, 118, 189, 253, 277, 325, 428, 429, 430, 678, 728,
1931	256, 644, 845,
1932	195, 320, 326, 453, 913, 985, 989, 993, 1095, 1100
1933	132, 299,
1934	28, 29, 147, 148, 150, 194, 259, 518, 892, 1041,
1935	30, 56, 321, 431, 840, 841,
1936	298, 863, 864, 992,
1937	260, 300, 512, 522, 570, 990,
1938	
1939	569, 869, 875,
1940	37, 39-44, 68, 69, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 117, 140, 201, 632, 1098, 1099, 1147, 1267-1270,
1941	8, 107, 114, 116, 141, 202, 506, 514, 567, 568, 733, 734, 846, 852, 853-856, 858, 860, 861, 862, 900, 903, 920, 1097,
1942	857, 859, 1089, 1092, 1094, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1115, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1121, 1131, 1133-1137, 1254-1266, 1271-1284, 1291-1335, 1354,
1943	1336-1353, 1355-1376, 1378-1402, 1406, 1407,
1944	1403, 1404, 1405, 1411, 1413, 1414-1430,
1945	1432-1454
1946	1455-1469, 1472, 1474, 1477, 1480
1947	1470, 1471, 1473, 1475, 1476, 1479,

Table 3. Purchased amulets and prices

Taufiq Canaan acquired most of his amulets through purchase. In this table I list all the items that he explicitly mentioned having bought between 1910 and 1946. Therefore, the phylacteries from Aleppo and the soaps with Christian iconography mentioned in Chapter 4, which were regularly sold to pilgrims, are not included. The year of purchase is given in most cases, disclosing how prices fluctuated over the years. The prices were not recorded for all the amulets. The prices of the amulets could be compared to prices of other kinds of products, such as basic goods, in order to show the value of amulets in the market at the time and place they were sold.

amulet number in catalogue	type of amulet	price	origin
4	tin maskeh	15 Turkish qirsh	Jerusalem, 1912
5	silver maskeh	18 turkish qirsh	Jerusalem, 1916
8	silver ibriqi	100 mils	bought from a Jew from Buhara, 1941
10	silver maskeh	unknown price	Jerusalem, 1920
11	maskeh	unknown price	Nablus, 1914
14	silver maskeh	unknown price	Jerusalem, 1918
15	silver maskeh	Price not given	Amman, 1916
21	maskeh made of zinc	Price not given	Jerusalem, 1916
22	silver maskeh	20 turkish qirsh	Jerusalem, 1917
23	silver maskeh	250 mils	Jerusalem, 1924
24	copper maskeh	unknown price	Jerusalem, 1922
27	tin maskeh	Price not given	Jerusalem, 1913
28	silver maskeh	300 mils	Gaza, 1934
29	silver maskeh	350 mils	Gaza, 1934
30	silver maskeh used in Zar ritual	350 mils	Gaza, 1935
34	silver amulet for the arm	400 mils	Nablus, 1920
37	silver amulet for arm	250 mils	From an antiquarian, 1940
38	two arm amulets made of silver	20 qirsh p/ item	Jerusalem, 1919

39	copper amulet	400 mils	Ohan, 4/9/1940
40	copper amulet for arm	750 mils	Ohan, 7/9/1940
41	amulet	500 mils	Ohan, 7/9/1940
42	copper arm amulet	350 mils	Ohan, 7/9/1940
43	arm amulet	350 mils	Ohan, 7/9/1940
44	arm amulet	300 mils	Ohan, 7/9/1940
49	silver amulet case	300 mils	Jerusalem
54	silver amulet case from Yemen	no price is given	Jerusalem 1918
56	amulet case	no price is given	Greece, 1935
57	silver ornament	no price is given	Jerusalem, 1929
62	two amulet cases	no price is given	From a merchant, Jerusalem, 1913
65	silver amulet case, Jewish	no price is given	From a Jewish merchant, 1916
69	silver amulet case	250 mils	Jerusalem, 1940
71	silver amulet case	no price is given	From a Muslim woman, Jerusalem, 1916
72	silver amulet case	no price is given	From a Christian merchant, 1916
77	silver amulet container	unknown price	Jerusalem, 1925
88-89	two taliqat (pendants?)	unknown price	Jerusalem, 1916
90	taliqa	Price not given	Jerusalem, 1917
95	silver maskeh	no price given	Jerusalem, 1913
97	500 years old maskeh	Price not given	Jerusalem
109, 110, 111, 112, 113,	five seal rings	100 mils each	Jerusalem, 1940
114	seal ring, Jewish	120 mils	Jerusalem, 1941

115	ring with stone	200 mils	Jerusalem, 1940
116	silver ring with stone	200 mils	Jerusalem, 1941
117	ring	100 mils	Jerusalem, 1940
136, 143	upper part of an ear dandusha	No price is given	From a merchant, Jerusalem, 1913
140	two nose earrings made of silver	250 mils	Ohan, 7/9/ 1940
141	copper keys	500 mils	Ohan, 1941
142	ornament for ear	No price is given	Jerusalem, 1923
149	chest ornament	No price is given	From a merchant, Jerusalem, 1922
152, 154	hair ornament	No price is given	Bir al-Sabah (Beersheba), 1917
157	neck chain	No price is given	Jerusalem, 1912
164	silver earring	No price is given	Jerusalem, 1920
166	seal	No price is given	Jerusalem, 1914
170	silver amulet case	no price given	Nablus, 1917
201	copper fish	no price given	Bought from Kleybo, 1940
221, 222	bracelets for children	no price given	Jerusalem, 1928
227	two anklets	no price given	Jerusalem, 1923
257	lodestone		Jerusalem, 1922
318-319	ambar chains		bought by a sick patient in Jerusalem
331	necklace with blue beads	no price given	Jerusalem, 1916
346-348	chain	no price given	Jerusalem
349-362	pendant on a chain	no price given	bought from a merchant at the Holy Sepulchre
428-429	imitation of alum and amulet case	no price given	Nabi Musa, 1930
430	imitation of talisman case	no price given	Nebi Musa market, 1930
431-433	amulet case “khiyar”	no price given	Jerusalem market, 1935
471-475	chain with glass hands manufactured in Hebron	no price given	purchased in 1912

494	ornament made of blue beads (used among the peasants)	no price given	Jerusalem
590	black bead used to cure depression	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
591	two stones against runny nose	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
593	two nipple beads against chapped skin	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
594	gallbladder beads	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
595	beads against siḥr (black magic)	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
596	beads against side (torso?) pain	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
597	beads to control bleeding	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
604-607	black bead used to cure depression	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
617-631	beads to cure different illnesses	no price given	from a sheikh descendant of al-Nubani, Jerusalem 1913
632	blue bead against evil eye (used among Christians)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1940
826	bell, blue bead and *al-mīs* wood	no price given	Qubayba 1917
827	amulet for a donkey	no price given	Hebron, 1915
846	rosary from Mecca	900 mils	Purchased at the shop of Muhammad Ali, on 15/10/1941, Jerusalem
852-860	bread stamps with the Christian iconography (saint Mar Mitri, Virgin Mary, baby Jesus, etc.)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1941
882, 883	written talismans on paper	no price given	purchased from a sheikh in Jerusalem, 1910
907	long wrapping with qur'anic inscriptions, numbers and seals	no price given	bought from a sheikh in Sheikh Nuran, 1916
1089, 1090, 1091, 1092	1089: silver maskeh with qur'anic inscriptions 1090: Musa stone maskeh with four dandusha-s 1091: Musa stone with inscriptions 1092: copper seal with Christian iconography (used to stamp the bread)	1089: 450 mils 1090: 180 mils 1091: 150 mils 1092: 650 mils	bought from an Arab Christian man on 9/1/1942
1093	cup (to prepare a medicinal drink)	300 mils	the seller had bought it from a peasant. Canaan purchased it from the same Arab Christian man mentioned above.
1097	round stone engraved on both sides	no price given	bought in 1941 from a Muslim man who had worn it
1100	stone with Our'anic inscription	no price given	bought from Rasas in 1932
1102	crescent and five-point star (to be fastened on a children's cap)	no price given	bought from a Jewish trader in 1942
1103	silver hand with three frogs	no price given	bought in 1942
1105	silver maskeh with inscription	no price given	bought in 1942
1106	maskeh	no price given	bought in 1942
1107	fish with many pieces	no price given	bought in 1942
1108	hand with Hebrew inscription	no price given	bought in 1942

1109	a metal fish (to be hung at the entrance of the house)	no price given	bought in 1942 from a Christian merchant who claims to have gotten it from a peasant who carried it on his belt. This amulets was used by Christians and Muslims alike.
1111, 1113, 1114	alum-blue bead-al-mis wooden bead (to be hung and protect cars, plants and people)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1925
1117	ring with an engraved stone in the shape of a heart (used it as a seal)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1133	silver amulet case	300 mils	Bought on March, 1942
1134-1137	pressure beads of different sizes. (called in Dear Ghassane dardabis)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1147	black bead used to cure depression	150 mils	Jerusalem, 1940
1254	printed talisman in the form of a booklet. From Egypt	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1255	printed talisman (names of *ahl al-badr*)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1256	*ḥirz al-andrun*. Talisman printed in Egypt	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1257	Folding talisman. Printed in Egypt	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1258	Folding talisman that includes the Most Beautiful Names of God, a supplication to Ukasha and other supplications. Printed in Egypt	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1259	*ḥirz al-jawshan.* Folding talisman, printed in Egypt	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1260	Folding printed talisman with Sura *Yā-Sin* and supplications	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1261	Two parts of a silver necklace (with coins and blue beads). Used among the bedouins and in the towns	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1262	necklace with stars and gilded silver hands.	820 mils	Jerusalem, 1942
1263	amulet with blue beads (used on children's caps). Iranian manufacture.	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1264	blue beads and a coin. (used on a child's cap)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1268	cross	no price given	Bought from a Christian bedouin woman from East Jordan in 1940
1271	ring stone used as a seal. Inscribed	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1278	silver fish (to be hung on a chain) with five dandusha-s	500 mils	Jerusalem, 1942
1279	small bell for animals	500 mils	Jerusalem, 1942
1280	oval silver plate with a red stone, from it seven dandusha-s hang	250 mils	Jerusalem, 1942
1281	triangular Musa stone with a six-point start and four dandusha-s	200 mils	Jerusalem??, 1942
1283	oval silver plate with two stones and seven holes	250 mils	Jerusalem, 1942
1291	oval blood stone	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1292	hand on a crescent (attached to the clothes of children)	no price given	Jerusalem??, 1942

1293	maskeh in the shape of a heart. It bears an inscription of the shahada and of Ali and his sword (*dhu al-fiqār*)	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1295	necklace with dandusha-s	25 qirsh	Jerusalem, 1942
1297, 1298	Russian cross made of bone	no price given	Jerusalem, 1942
1300	crystal tray with Qur'anic inscription	5 pounds (junayhat)	1942
1307, 1308	round seal with the image of the Dome of the Rock	the price was in pounds.	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1309	small round seal with inscription about Suleyman	500 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314	small seal with Qur'anic inscription	400/ 500 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1315	seal with a four-line inscriptions	300 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1316	small seal with an inscription	500 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1317	stamp on a ring. Inscribed with numbers	500 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1318, 1324	six point star with numbers and the names of ahl al-kahf	500 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1319	round seal with inscription	400 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1320, 1321	round seal, blurred inscriptions	300 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1322	oval seal, with three line inscription	300 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1323	Kabk (Turkish coin)	200 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1325	long seal with inscription	200 mils	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1326-1330	hand-shape seals with inscriptions	between 300- 500 mils each	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1331-1333	seals in the shape of a sword with inscriptions	500 mils each	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1334,1335	seals with Musa stone	250 mils each	Bought from Sheikh Khalil Badr al-Danaf, Jerusalem, 1942
1363	pressure bead with three dandusha-s	60 Palestinian pounds	Jerusalem, 1943
1364	copper axe	250 mils	Bought from a Sheikh, 1943
1365	nose rings with blue beads	80 Palestinian pounds	1943
1366	viper amulet	200 mils	1943
1367	two claws set on silver	350 mils	1943
1368, 1369, 1370	Moroccan khamsa (with and without beads)	120/150 mils each	Jerusalem, 1943
1378	kohl container with dandusha-s and inscription	600 mils	1943
1379	round mirror with five dandusha-s	500 mils	1943
1380	amulet with three dandusha-s	200 mils	1943
1381	khirzat al-nafs	150 mils	1943
1382	talisman container made of iron	200 mils	1943

1383	talisman capsule with inscription	150 mils	1943
1387	inscribed seal with the depiction of the Ibrahimi Mosque and al-Aqsa	500 mils	1943
1388	round seal with inscription	500 mils	Bought at the Ibrahimi Mosque
1390, 1391	black stone with blue bead	100 mils	1943
1392	ancient blue glass beads	80 mils	1943
1399	amulet of the fortress: al-ḥiṣn al-ḥaṣīn	no price given	Printed in Egypt, sold in Jerusalem, 1943
1403	single ear-drop shape pendant with inscription	300 mils	Bought in 1944
1404	silver waistband (belt) with dandusha-s	500 mils	Bought in 1944
1405	piece of Turkish coin with dandusha-s	200 mils	1944
1422	ring with seal. Inscribed with numbers	300 mils	Jerusalem, 1944
1423	very old maskeh	300 mils	Jerusalem, 1944
1425	glass hand (European manufacture)	no price given	Bought in Damascus from woman in 1944
1432	silver amulet called washāwīsh/ khurās, hung above the ears.	500 mils	Bought in 1945
1433	silver bedouin ornament used on the forehead with blue beads and dandusha-s	200 mils	Bought in 1945
1434,1435	silver ornament for the chest with bells and dandusha-s	450 - 500 mils	Bought in 1945
1445, 1446, 1447	silver fish (new manufacture)	between 200 to 300 mils each one	Jerusalem,1945
1448	silver hand (new manufacture)	150 mils	Jerusalem, 1945
1449	small amulet with the shape of a palm tree	300 mils	Jerusalem, 1945
1450	snake	300 mils	Jerusalem, 1945
1451	silver earrings	350 mils	Jerusalem, 1945
1452-1454	small copper bells	250 mils	Jerusalem, 1945
1455	copper seal with angels (to stamp the shroud)	no price given	Bought in 3/8/1946
1457	Dandushat al-Khader	250 mils	Bought in 1946
1458	old Bizantine frame with the image of a saint (the picture is new)	600 mils	Bought in 1946
1472	black stone inscribed with the names of ahl al-kahf, six-point star	125 qirsh	Bought from Ohan, 1946
1474	iron amulet with dandusha-s	no price given	Bought in Egypt in 1946
1477	fish shape kohl container	150 mils	Bought in Egypt in 1946
1480	green stone carved	750 mils	Bought from Ohan, 1946

Table 4. Objects donated to Taufiq Canaan

In this table I list all the names of the individuals who donated amulets. This information is based on Canaan's notes, in which he recorded having received the objects as gifts. As explored in Chapter 4., Canaan probably felt the need to write down the name of the gift givers as a kind of reciprocal act of recognition. However, there are a few cases in which the identity of the giver is unclear, such as those described as "unknown pilgrim", "a Muslim person", or "someone from a particular family." The table shows the kind of objects that the donors gave to Canaan; items that they must have considered relevant and suitable to fit in his collection of amulets.

Donor's name	**Item's number in catalogue.**	**Description of the object**	**Remarks**
Sheikh of al-Haram al-Sharif (probably Sheikh Ibrahim al-Danaf)	942	a pilgrimage certificate of the holy sites in Jerusalem and Hebron. It contains seals of a hand and a sword.	Printed in Jerusalem. Obtained by the Sheikh in 1913
Sheikh Ibrahim al-Danaf (al-Ansari)	589, 941, 949	**589**: a stone from al-haram al-sharif against jaundice. **941**: printed copy of Prophet Muhammad's letter to the Muqawqis. It contains the family tree of the Prophet. **949**: supplication with the depiction of Islamic holy places.	**589:** Kids were supposed to lick it, or submerge a piece of it in water and drink it. Canaan received it from the Sheikh in 1914. **941, 949**: Kinds of Muslim amulets meant to be hung in the house, issued by Sheikh Ibrahim
Uthman Abu al-Saud	940	a hand-written amulet. Copy of Shumūs al-Anwār	This amulet was hung in the pilgrim's house. Manufactured 60 years prior to the year Canaan got it, in 1912.
Sheikh Yahia al-Danaf (al-Ansari)	1094	a seal	used to stamp paper sheets, which were given to pilgrims for protection. Obtained as a gift in 1924 from the Sheikh.
A member from al-Ansari family	952	a talismanic seal.	Manufactured in Jerusalem by al-Ansari family. Distributed among pilgrims and local inhabitants.
Sheikh Najib al-Nubani	283, 294, 836, 1053	283, 284: written amulet against al-jinn. it was made explicitly for Canaan in 1914. 1053: written talisman on a sheep scapula against facial paralysis of a man.	al-Nubani family was known for practicing traditional medicine. Najīb al-Nubāni was located in Wādī al-jūz, a neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. 1053: It had to be burnt hanging from a wild olive tree. (not certain if the sheikh gave it to Canaan)

Sheikh Atif (sufi from al-qadiriya)	886, 889, 897, 898	**886**: Our'anic verse in poor handwriting. **889**: a written amulet folded in a triangle shape. In contains a small seal and a command to stop the fever that reads "By God's order, let the fever go out of so-and-so, son of so-and-so:" **897**: two scribbled seals, most of them are letters. It was folded into a triangle. **898**: a scribbled verse against all evil	**886**: used to prevent miscarriage. Obtained from the Sheikh in Jerusalem in 1914. **889**: Given to Canaan in 1914. **897**: Given to Canaan in 1914
Lydia Einsler	1344, 1346-1350, 1352, 1353, 1356	1344: *ṭāḥūnat al-naml*. 1346: pierced stone from a tomb. 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350: *ṭāḥūnat* made of different materials 1352: inscribed metal disc from a tomb. 1353: oval stone used as amulet from a tomb. 1356: amulet from a tomb	Most of the pieces given by Lydia Einsler come from tombs.
Bishop Basilius	1115	a seal with a stone representing the birth of Christ.	Palestinian manufacture. 50 years old. Received from the Bishop in 1942.
Theodoros	1131, 1426?	**1131**: cross made of stone with the image of Mar Saba. **1426**: belt with the sign of the cross.	**1131**: Obtained in 1942 as a gift from Theodoros, a monk at the Monastery of Mar Saba **1426**: Obtained in 1944 in Mar Saba from "a monk". Probably from Theodoros too.
Sami Jaltini	1098/1099	letters	Dated 1940
F. Hadad	150	*washāwish*. piece of Bedouin jewellery with 5 *dandusha-s* with small moons.	Worn over the ears and hangs from the headscarf. Given to Canaan in 1934.
Musa Basha al-Husseini	982	a written amulet with Qur'anic inscription and eight stamped seals	Old manufacture. Given to Canaan in 1916.
al-Hajj Ibrahim Bek Ilm al-Din	1342	dates from Mecca	Canaan got the dates from his wife in 1943, probably the same year she and her husband performed the pilgrimage.
Herman Shneller	892	a written talisman on paper with bad handwriting. It was inside a cloth bag with clay-like material. This bag was put with egg shell in a stitched leather bag.	Grandson of the founder of the Syrian Orphanage. The talisman was hung on the neck of a mule he bought for the Orphanage.

Haydar Klaybo	1118, 1463-1466, 1476, 1479,	**1118**: silk headscarf with embroidery and beads. **1463/4**: closed talismans in a leather pouch with two strings to be tied to the arm. **1465**: amulet written on parchment. All the text is Our'anic. **1466**: written talisman, un-opened. Folded in a triangle shape wrapped with a cloth. **1476**: dandusha from a fear cup with the names of God. **1479**: Fear bowl, modern, five circles of Our'anic verses.	**1118**: from the coastal region (Jaffa and Gaza). Canaan obtained it in 1942. **1464**: Obtained in 1946 **1465**: Obtained in 1946 **1466**: Obtained in 1946 **1479**: Obtained from Klaybo in 1947
Mrs. Klaybo (wife of Haydar Klaybo)	1101	*mashkhaṣ,* a Byzantine golden coin with *khirza kibās* (pressure bead)	To protect from any blood ailment (blood pressure). Given to Canaan in 1942.
Haydar Klaybo's grandson's son	903	a talisman written for Mr. Klaybo	the inscription is in different colours to protect from any harm. Given to Canaan in 1941.
Lydia Katarou	958	Handwritten talisman with 7 seals.	Used against the *qarīna*. Made for Lydia Katarou. Given to Canaan in 1925
Mr. Klayn	733	an octagonal amulet container made of silver with inscriptions on the sides	Given as a gift to Canaan in 1941
Matia Nuhas	1372, 1374, 1438-1444, 1469-1471, 1473, 1475	1372: talisman case with silver chain. **1374**: Bead against sty/evil eye **1469**: empty talisman container made of copper, in the shape of a book with the image of Christ. **1470**: copper container with the image of Christ with a crown of thorns **1471**: a silver hand of new manufacture with geometrical designs. **1473**: *ḥajar ras al-qalb* used simultaneously as *ḥajar nafs* with a chain to be hung. **1475**: maska. oval pendant with inscription on both sides.	**1374** given to Canaan as a gift in 1943 **1469**: Christian amulet. Obtained from Matia in 1946. **1470**: Obtained from Matia in 1947. **1471**: The geometrical designs on the hand can be seen often in tattoos (Bedouin tattoos?) Obtained from Matia in 1947. **1473**: Given to Canaan in 1947 **1475**: Given to Canaan in 1947
Mrs. J. Nazal	1373	*hilāl* (crescent moon) that contains a boar fang with a silver frame and a star from which three smaller stars hang	
Nitaji al-Nashashibi	1462	sword of Ali with an inscription, the name of Prophet Muhammad and the year 1651.	Given to Canaan in 1946
A member of al-Nimri family	1116	an Indian mirror	Used in case of epilepsy or convulsions, put infant of the face. Given to Canaan in 1927

A Muslim woman from al-Hamouda family	877	a booklet with God's name and the story of *ahl a-kahf*	carried to be protected from the *qarīna*, who is believed to be the cause of epilepsy.
Someone from al-Barghuti family	1371	*mashkhaṣ.* silver medallion with inscription.	Given as a gift in 1943
From al-Mamluk family	1362	a coffee cup to dissolve a talisman in it.	Jerusalem, 1943
Bint Mustafa	1401	a pilgrimage certificate from Mecca for Muhammad Yalanji	Given to Canaan in 1943
Mr. Arazi	920	a piece of blood stone	Mr. Arazi was an arquitect and gave this objects to Canaan as a gift in 1941. He got the the stone from a peasant from Andor who assured him that the stone stops bleeding.
A Muslim friend	779	*qarn al-hatit*	It is dissolved in milk and drunk against snake bite. It was given to Canaan as a gift in 1912 by a friend (no name is given)
A member of the Chamber of Commerce (Berlin)	845	a European chain with closed amulet case (cucumber-shape) with 12 dandusha-s (bells)	1931
A Muslim friend	902	an old wrapping/rag thorn in many parts/pieces; carried in a container made of tin	Given as a gift in 1910
A Muslim person	939	a supplication that reads: *lā ḥawl wa lā quwa ilā billah al-'alī al-'aḍhīm* لا حول ولا قوة ا لا با لله العلي العظيم	Hung in the house. Given to Canaan by a Muslim as a gift.
Palestinian female pilgrim	1276	a fear cup with the inscription of *ayat al-kursi* (the Throne Verse)	This cup has indian manufacture and was sold in Mecca. Owned by a Palestinian female pilgrim in 1942.
Female pilgrim	1339	a seal on a turquoise stone.	Against the envious eye. Carried by a female pilgrim. Given to Canaan as a gift in 1943.

Female pilgrim	1406	a silver *māska* inscribed with a Qur'anic verse.	Given to Canaan in 'aid al-adha, 1943
Unknown donor	1341	a red jasper against anger	From Mecca, given to Canaan as a gift in 1943.
Unknown donor	1431	a triangular metal object with seven *dandusha-s*, stars and a hand.	Given as a gift
Unknown donor	1436	a fish-shape bead.	Given as a gift in 1945
Unknown donor	1402	a Christian talisman printed in the Franciscan Monastery of Jerusalem. It has a prayer found in the tomb of Christ in 1505.	It protects its owner from any kind of evil. Given to Canaan as a gift in 1943. The identity of the donor is not given.
Unknown pilgrim	943	a pilgrimage certificate with seals and the picture of the Dome of the Rock	Used by the pilgrim as an amulet
Unknown donor	734	a cucumber-shape piece of iron (not hollow, against (black) magic. Commonly used to protect children	Given as a gift in 1941

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http://museum.birzeit.edu/collections/tawfiq-canaan-amulets

Wellcome Library
https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b24921257

UK National Archives
https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/N13846539

Palestine Exploration Fund
https://www.pef.org.uk/history/

Palestinian News and Info Agency (*al-mawāsim al-sha'abiyya al-filasṭīnīyya, in wikāla al-'anbā' wa al-ma'lūmāt al-filasṭīniyya*)
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Samenvatting

In 1995 doneerden de dochters van Taufiq Canaan 1379 objecten aan Birzeit Universiteit (BZU). Deze objecten maakten onderdeel uit van de amuletten die Canaan verzamelde gedurende een periode van bijna vijftig jaar (van 1905 - 1947). Canaan verzamelde ook amuletten op verzoek. Deze zijn nu opgenomen in de collecties van het Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford en het Museum voor Volkenkunde in Dresden. Omdat BZU de amuletten als één verzameling heeft opgenomen werd besloten om het de Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets te noemen, *Majmūʻa tawfīq kanʻān li l-ḥujub al-filasṭīniya* in het Arabisch. Dit is een unieke collectie die niet alleen het grootste aantal Palestijnse amuletten ter wereld verzameld door één persoon bevat, maar ook de beschrijvingen over de amuletten. Daarnaast komen de typen objecten in de verzameling niet vaak voor in andere collecties, die vooral afkomstig zijn van de elite, volledig beschreven zijn met teksten uit de Koran, of elementen bevatten die te maken hebben met waarzeggerij of magie. De collectie die Taufiq Canaan samenstelde bevat objecten die gebruikt werden in het dagelijks leven van boeren, semi-nomaden en stedelingen in Palestina. De amuletten variëren van hele simpele uit de natuurlijke omgeving gepakte objecten tot objecten die gemaakt zijn met bijzondere technieken waarin de materialen op een zeer onderscheidende manier worden toegepast.

De onderzoekers die de verzameling bestudeerden benaderden het als één geheel, alsof deze vanaf het begin al zo gepland is geweest. En omdat alle objecten van het label ‘amulet’ zijn voorzien, zijn zij alleen begrepen als krachtige objecten voor het verkrijgen van bescherming tegen het kwaad en tegenslag, om ziekte af te wenden of te genezen, of om geluk te brengen. In dit kader heeft onderzoek zich vooral gericht op de functie waarin Canaan als arts in geïnteresseerd was; als objecten die werden gebruikt in traditionele / volksgeneeskunde. Ondanks dat veel van de amuletten verzameld werden buiten Palestina, bepaalde het label ‘Palestijnse amuletten’ hun rol als symbool van nationale identiteit.

Het werk van Canaan vormt een belangrijke bron voor het begrijpen van het gebruik van amuletten in het Palestina aan het begin van de twintigste eeuw. Wij moeten zijn werk beschouwen als onderdeel uitmakend van de debatten die kenmerkend zijn voor de tijd waarin hij leefde. Tegenwoordig zijn er theorieën en methoden waarmee amuletten benaderd kunnen worden vanuit perspectieven anders dan die van de werking en de betekenis binnen de Palestijnse folklore en

geneeswijzen. Het werk van Appadurai and Kopytoff over de culturele biografie van dingen maken het mogelijk amuletten te beschouwen als objecten met een leven die daarin verschillende fasen doorlopen. Het is een raamwerk om amuletten te conceptualiseren als dingen die zich op een vloeibare manier bewegen door verschillende contexten van tijd en ruimte. De amuletten krijgen in elke context verschillende waarden en functies binnen processen van betekenisgeving. Deze fasen corresponderen met de verzamelactiviteiten van Taufiq Canaan en de netwerken waarin de amuletten circuleerden voor en tijdens opname in zijn verzameling. In deze netwerken is het mogelijk om de amuletten te beschouwen in relatie tot de mensen die betrokken waren bij de fabricage, activering, distributie en handel. Maar ook tot de plekken waar ze hun oorsprong hebben, geactiveerd werden, verkocht, bewaard en tentoongesteld werden.

De fasen en contexten worden in elk hoofdstuk onderzocht. Hoofdstuk 1 is een oefening in reflectie op de historiciteit van onze analytische categorieën. Ik stel vragen over de bruikbaarheid van de Engelse termen *amulet* en *talisman* voor het analyseren van objecten die in Palestina gebruikt werden, en met name door ze te contrasteren met de *emische* termen die voorkomen in de notities van Taufiq Canaan. Deze termen (te vinden in Tabel 1) zijn afgeleid van de gebruikte materialen, de vormen waarop amuletten leken, of de abstractie daarvan, de grootte, de combinatie van materialen, de associatie met een heilige en van de gebruiksfunctie. Het belang van deze emische termen is dat zij de specifieke manieren tonen waarop mensen met de amuletten omgingen. Uit de notities van Canaan blijkt duidelijk dat de amuletten niet altijd magische krachten hadden. De amuletten werden ook gedragen vanwege hun relatie tot een heilige, omdat zij eigendom waren van een voorvader, omdat zij inscripties uit de Koran bevatten, omdat het geschenken gekocht in Mekka waren, of omdat werd geloofd dat de ingrediënten medicinale eigenschappen bevatten.

Hoofdstuk 2 gaat over de "eerste" functie die werd toebedeeld aan de amuletten, geneeskracht en bescherming. In het begin van de de twintigste eeuw, toen Canaan zijn amuletten verzamelde, zag hij dat Palestijnse mannen en vrouwen ze gebruikten voor het oplossen van alledaagse problemen zoals ziekte, onvruchtbaarheid, een slechte oogst, liefdesproblemen maar ook voor bescherming tegen allerlei soorten kwaad. Er was een grote verscheidenheid aan objecten die konden worden gebruikt als amuletten, en vele manieren om ze kracht te geven. Ondanks de diversiteit van de amuletten en de verschillende manieren waarop zij werkten, weerspiegelen zij overtuigingen en gewoontes die gedeeld werden door alle dragers, onafhankelijk van hun identiteit als christen, moslim of jood. Deze gemeenschappelijk beleving komt voort uit de dagelijkse interacties met het natuurlijke en agrarische landschap van Palestina, en uit gemeenschappelijke

kennis over heilige plaatsen en geschiedenissen die manieren van bidden, rituelen rondom heiligen en geneeswijzen hebben bepaald.

In hoofdstuk 3 onderzoek ik de overgang van amuletten als objecten voor bescherming en genezing naar de fase van verzamelobjecten. Amuletten die niet effectief bleken werden weggegooid of werden verzameld door etnografen zoals Canaan. Ook interessante, zeldzame of unieke objecten die waardig genoeg werden geacht om te worden bestudeerd werden toegevoegd aan een verzameling. Het hoofdstuk begint met een korte historische beschrijving van de vestiging van christelijke missies en hun rol in de transformatie van het stedelijk milieu in Jerusalem waarin Canaan zich ontwikkelde als arts en etnograaf. Tegen deze achtergrond onderzoek ik de opleving van het Heilige Land en de toenemende etnografische interesses die leidden tot de totstandkoming van meerdere generaties van verzamelaars, inclusief oorspronkelijke Palestijnen zoals Canaan. Door analyse van de verzamelactiviteit van Canaan, reflecteer ik ook op de daad van het verzamelen als een proces, waarin de motieven en redenen voor het verwerven van objecten veranderde in relatie tot socio-politieke gebeurtenissen en Canaan's eigen wasdom als geleerde, arts en politiek betrokken persoon. Het hoofdstuk graaft ook dieper in de overlap tussen verschillende gebruiken van amuletten in een koloniale context. Deze gelijktijdige gebruiksvormen laten ook nu nog zien dat traditionele geneeswijzen waarin amuletten een rol spelen niet passief werden uitgewist of vervangen door moderne geneeskunde.

Hoofdstuk 4 gaat over de commercialisering van amuletten. Ik onderzoek hoe amuletten waardevolle goederen werden die circuleerden in publieke en private netwerken. Buiten de netwerken die werden opgezet door verzamelaars zoals Canaan, gingen deze objecten ook al langdurig rond binnen families als geneeskundige en beschermende remedies. Ook circuleerden deze amuletten op lokale markten en in de bedevaartsoorden. Het hoofdstuk verkent ook de effecten van buitenlands toerisme naar Jerusalem en de rol van buitenlandse geleerden en reizigers op de totstandkoming van nieuwe commerciële netwerken met daarin gespecialiseerde antiekwinkels die traditionele objecten zoals kleding en amuletten verhandelden. In dit kader identificeer ik nieuwe vormen van consumptie van amuletten, waarin zowel boeren, semi-nomaden en stedelingen een rol hadden.

Hoofdstuk 5 draait om de conceptualisatie van de amuletten van Canaan als een "Palestinian Collection of Amulets" vlak nadat zij werden gedoneerd aan BZU in 1995. Terwijl de betekenislagen worden afgepeld door de jaren heen, begin ik de analyse van het naamgevingsproces van de verzameling in 1995 en de manier waarop amuletten werden geadresseerd in de

tentoonstelling *Ya Kafi, Ya Shafi* in 1998. Gebaseerd op mijn correspondentie met leden van het tentoonstellingscomité, en het analyseren van de catalogus, verkent dit hoofdstuk de boodschap die deze tentoonstelling probeerde over te brengen. Het hoofdstuk gaat dan verder over hoe de amuletten zijn gecatalogiseerd en benaderd na de tentoonstelling. Het hoofdstuk onderzoekt ook hoe het Palestijns-zijn van de objecten niet zomaar een product is van de jaren ’90, maar gebaseerd is op Canaan’s persoonlijke ervaring van hoe Palestina een natie werd tijdens zijn leven. De verschillende manieren waarop hij de amuletten verwierf laat de netwerken zien die hij opbouwde in zijn leven, en hoe deze netwerken door de tijd heen veranderden parallel aan zijn toenemende betrokkenheid bij het politieke leven van zijn land. Omdat het hoofdstuk raakt aan hoe de vorming van een nationale identiteit intiem verstrengeld is met het verzamelen, tonen en tentoonstellen van materiële cultuur uit het verleden, omvat het ook Canaan’s politieke kijk op en overwegingen over het Palestijns-zijn van het materiaal dat hij verzamelde.

Deze laatste fase van amuletten als symbool van de nationale cultuur van Palestina kan worden beschouwd als overlappend met andere fasen. Ondanks het feit dat de amuletten van Canaan tegenwoordig permanent worden tentoongesteld bij de ingang van de bibliotheek van BZU waar zij studenten herinneren aan hun cultureel erfgoed, gebruiken nog steeds veel Palestijnen vergelijkbare amuletten in hun dagelijks leven als geneeskrachtige en beschermende objecten. Anderen vallen niet meer terug op amuletten voor deze functies, maar gaan nog steeds naar winkels om amuletten te kopen vanwege hun zeldzaamheid en esthetische waarde, en omdat zij doen denken aan wijdverspreide gebruiken en tradities die al eeuwen lang deel uitmaken van de Palestijnse cultuur.

Curriculum vitae

Marcela A. Garcia Probert was born in Mexico City on 17 June 1981. She studied Arts at Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana and obtained her BA in 2005. From 2007 to 2008 she carried out a specialisation in History and Theories in the Study of Religion at the Institute of Philological Research of the National Autonomous University of Mexico. In 2010 she obtained her MA degree in Middle East Studies from El Colegio de México. Her MA thesis is a study of the terms used in the Quran that refer to the sacredness of the Kaaba and adjacent sites prescribed to be visited during the ḥajj. After her studies in Mexico, she traveled to Egypt to deepen her knowledge of Classical Arabic and to learn Egyptian Dialect (2009-2011, and in 2012). She taught BA courses on the History of Islam and the Middle East in International Relations in the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the Hellenic Cultural Center of Mexico and Casa Lamm. In 2014 she moved to the Netherlands to study a PhD under the supervision of Dr. Petra Sijpesteijn (Leiden University) and Dr. Salim Tamari (Birzeit University /Institute for Palestine Studies). During her time in Leiden, Marcela attended and participated in many seminars, workshops and conferences in the Netherlands. She became a member of NISIS and participated in the 2015 Spring School in Rabat and in 2016 in Istanbul. In 2016 she co-organised the international conference: Amulets and Talismans in the Muslim World in Leiden. For her doctoral research, Marcela carried out extensive fieldwork in Palestine. Since 2019 she teaches the BA course Anthropology of Islam with Dr. Cristiana Strava.