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

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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 (*'aṭṭārīn*), 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. *Majmū'a Tawfīq Kan'ān li l-ḥujub. Makhṭūṭa bi khaṭ Tawfīq Kan'ān*. 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.