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Published in:
Bibliotheca Orientalis

Citation for published version (APA):

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Tawfiq Dawani is a Christian Palestinian Arab. It is a well-known fact that Christians are one of the minority groups in the Middle East, so much so that for many people 'Arab' is synonymous with 'Muslim'. And among all the nation-states that have been established in the Arab world since the end of the colonial era there is no Palestinian State. Palestinians are foreigners in their own country. Tawfiq Dawani feels himself a stranger in his own culture and country.

The raison d'etre of anthropology is the study of other cultures and societies. Tawfiq Dawani had dreamed of visiting North Yemen since his childhood, because he was intrigued by the stories he heard in the school and the church of his native village. Stories about the bold Himyari prince Sayf ben-di-Yazin and about the visit of the famous Queen of Sheba to Jerusalem. Later when he was studying ethnology he was able to realize his dream by choosing this country to do some field research.

Yet he was confronted with many unexpected events and attitudes during his visits to North Yemen. During his first trip he deliberately pretended to be a muslim. He chose this role because he wanted to resemble as closely as possible the people he wanted to study and to participate as intimately as possible in their lives. It was also a way of trying to avoid trouble, but on one occasion he offended a strictly religious person by drinking alcohol. During his second trip to this country he got into more serious trouble, as he found himself one day involved against his will in a quarrel of politically opposite factions in the village, in which he wanted to do his field research. He was arrested, taken back to San'a where he was jailed for not being trustworthy. That was the only reason given to him for his arrest. After 54 days he was let out of prison but he had to leave the country as persona-non-grata. After 54 days he was let out of prison but he had to leave the country as persona-non-grata. Tawfiq Dawani had time to reconsider his research methods and he came to the conclusion that he should not have chosen the role of a muslim as he realized now that there are limits to participating in another culture and society.

Starting from his own experience as a research student of a foreign culture, he began to think about experience in ethnology in general, first on a more abstract level by looking at some theoretical elements in the study of ethnology, and secondly by examining the experience of other travellers to the Yemen, principally Carsten Niebuhr, who visited the Yemen in the 18th century. Niebuhr’s knowledge and experience of this — to him — strange culture allowed him to cast a fresh and different look at his own society and culture on his return home. For this reason Dawani says he could be called one of the earliest ethnologists.

In contrast, according to Dawani, U.J. Seetzens failed as an ethnologist. Seetzens travelled from Germany to Yemen in the 19th century and died there, probably poisoned by the orders of the Imam. He failed as an ethnologist, says Dawani, because he did not succeed in combining the cultural norms of his own society, which were connected with his role as a Western scholar and those of another society, which were connected with his role as guest of the Imam.

The experiences of a few more 19th century’s travellers from Germany to the Yemen such as A de Wrede, S. Langer, H. Burchardt and Eduard Glaser are also briefly discussed.

Dawani’s own experiences during his field research in the Yemen are told at the end of his book. His conclusion is that the base on which ethnological knowledge is built is restricted. That is the subjective experience of the researcher who as a participant observes another society with an alien culture. As one penetrates into the new and alien culture one becomes alienated from one’s own. Yet if this double estrangement is reflected on in terms of the interrelationship of cultures, the ethnologist can become a broker or an interpreter between the different cultures.

Dawani’s book looks like a kind of programme. The requirements of estrangement for executing this programme are largely met in his life. We are looking forward to further results of his research.

Amsterdam, september 1989

HAN SCHELLART


The collection of the most important writings of Martin Schreiner (1863-1926) has been undertaken by Moshe Perlmann (b. 1905), a former professor of Arabic at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Martin [Mordechai Zvi] Schreiner was born into a poor family in Nagyvarad, Hungary. His father, a teacher of Hebrew, died when Martin Schreiner was still young. During 1882-87 he studied at the Rabbinical Seminary and the University of Budapest, where he came under the influence of Ignaz Goldziher. Schreiner served as a rabbi in Csurgó between 1887-92 and during 1892-4 as an instructor of the Jewish Teacher’s Training Institute in Budapest. From 1894-1902 he was professor at the Lehranstalt fuer die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin. Becoming mentally ill in 1902, he entered a sanatorium. He was to spend the rest of his life there.

His last publication (Die jüngsten Urteile über das Judentum kritisch untersucht, Berlin 1902) was directed against the Jew baiting of Paul de Lagarde (who as was a scholar of Semitic languages editor of Hartizi’s Tabkemonii; and as a German anti-Semitic nationalist inventor of the Madagascar plan), Ed. V. Hartmann, Ed. Meyer and Houston Chamberlain. Schreiner countered ‘the conscious and unconscious endeavour [of the Christologian historiography] to glorify the Indo-Germanian race’ which can be traced in the works of the above mentioned. It is part of the debate entailed by Adolf von Harnack’s lectures on Das Wesen des Christentums, which was reviewed earlier by Leo Baec (1901; MGWJ 45, NF9) and later on countered by Baec’s book das Wesen des Judentums (1905, 1921).
The Gesammelte Schriften contain articles, which, although written long ago, have still not lost their value. Of particular interest are his comments about Moses ibn Ezra’s Kitāb al-Muhādārah wa-l-Mudhakārah, and religious polemics. Moshe Perlmann added at the end of the Gesammelte Schriften a list of publications by Schreiner (taken from an earlier published bibliography by J.H. Schmelczer) and an appendix in which misprints, mistakes etc. are corrected, partly based on the author’s own notes; numerous passages from manuscripts are identified with those occurring in printed editions which have appeared since the original publication of his articles; and bibliographical information is supplied based on articles in the latest Encyclopedia of Islam and Encyclopedia Judaica.

In his introduction Moshe Perlmann tries to paint a picture of the life and intellectual development of Martin Schreiner. Among his teachers were Wilhelm Bauer (1850-1913), Aggada and Medieval exegesis specialist; David Kaufmann (1852-1899), scholar in Medieval Arab and Jewish philosophy; and Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921), a famous scholar of Islamic studies, who was only appointed professor in 1904.

Schreiner was interested in the links between Arab and Jewish studies, especially in the field of medieval Arab and Jewish philosophy and theology. Since much of his material was still in unedited manuscripts, he had to copy lengthy excerpts which he later used for various publications. At the Jewish Teacher’s Training Institute (1891-93) he prepared a text book. In Berlin where he settled in 1894, he met several persons of the orthodox (Hildesheimer) seminar, and was also in touch with the Nestor of Jewish scholarship, Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907). At the “Lehramtstät für die Wissenschaft des Judentums” in Berlin Schreiner had among his pupils Leo Baecck (1873-1956), later to be the leading rabbi in Germany, who reviewed Schreiner’s Der Kalam in der jüdische Literatur (1895; rev. Jüdische Chronik 2, 1895/96, pp. 90-91).

Schreiner’s Islamic studies continue Goldziher’s research. They distinguished the trends and fashions of Islamic thought. Schreiner also traces the impact of these thoughts upon Jewish thinkers.

Many of Schreiner’s writings deal with apologetics and religious polemics or descriptions of the Jewish settlements in the Arabic and Islamic world, including passages from al-Yaʾqūbi’s Historiae, Ibn Hazm’s Milaḥ wa-l-Nihāl [based on excerpts from the Leiden Ms. Warner 480 made by Goldziher], al-Birūnī’s Chronology and others. One of the longer articles in this field is his ZDMG contribution entitled ‘Zur Geschichte der Polemik zwischen Juden und Mohammedanern’ (pp. 75-159).

There are also discussions about Jewish chronicles compared with possible Arabic sources such as Josef b. Isak Sambari’s Chronicle on synagogues and Jewish life in Egypt in comparison with al-Maqrīzī’s History on the same subject. Another article entitled ‘contributions à l’histoire des juifs en Egypte’ deals with a collection of fatwās by Ahmad ibn ‘Abd al-Haq [Ms. Landberg no. 928, Royal Library Berlin] and the partial edition of its Arabic text.

The contents of this work are not very tolerant towards the Jews, which made Schreiner exclaim: ‘On peut voir, par ce qui précède, que l’intolérance théologique et la haine des races ont toujours tenu le même langage. On croyait politique de contraindre la minorité par une douce oppression’. (p. 208 [213]).

Some articles are devoted to the study of the Hebrew language based on medieval Arabic and Judeo-Arabic sources, such as the article entitled ‘Zur Geschichte der Aussprache des Hebräischen’ (pp. 25-71).

Other articles are devoted to Islamic dogmatics and theologic movements in Islam, such as his article on ‘Ash’a‑ritenthum’ (pp. 160-198) and one on ‘Geschichte der theologic Bewegungen im Islam’ (pp. 366-502) with lengthy extracts taken from Arabic texts edited by his hand. Another subject was the influence of Islamic theologic thinking upon Judaism, which appeared as ‘Der Kalam in der jüdischen Literatur’ (pp. 280-346), and which consists of an impressive survey of medieval Jewish thinkers. Recent publications by Samuelson (1986)¹ and Smidt van Gelder (1986)² show that in the field of medieval religious philosophy such as the writings of the twelfth century author Ibn Da’ud (cf. his Al-ʾAqidah al-raṣfīḥ or Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah) Schreiner’s writings have not lost their actuality. His article on Moses ibn Ezra’s Muhādārah is one of the first to realise the importance of this unique Judeo-Arabic Book of Poetics. It contains the first analysis of the book followed by many other scholarly achievements by Halper, Braun, Scheindlin, Halkin, Allony, Pagis, Dana, Montserrat Mas and others⁴.

Schreiner was involved in contemporary polemics with intolerant Christians and other enemies of Judaism. At the same time he studied the medieval polemics between Islam and Judaism. This brought him to the conclusion that the sufferings of the Jewish minorities in his time were not really so very different from those in the past.

Amsterdam/Leiden, 9/10/89

Arie Schippers

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interests concerned this period. It is a sound piece of biographical and historical research which offers an insight into the lives and careers of 21 top-ranking Ottoman personalities. These include an Ottoman prince, a descendant of the House of Paleologus of Byzantine emperors, a ducal son from Herzegovina and sons-in-law of the Sultan. All were governors-general or provincial governors next to have held other high office in the government and the army and navy of the Ottoman Empire.

The exact criteria of selection are not stated. The author writes (pp. I-II) that she limited herself in the course of her research to the top-level of Ottoman statesmen who played an important role in the central government. Indeed not all that grand-viziers of the period are included. I surmise therefore that the choice Mrs Reindl made has been one of a practical nature. This is hardly a defect since now we have at the hand a most welcome addition to the small collection of biographical reference works available to the non-orientalist historians of the Ottoman Empire.

This volume, rich in historical data (also included in the many footnotes), can thus play the role of a bridge between the still more or less separated fields of orientalist and western historians of the Ottoman Empire and the Near East as a whole.

An historical sketch of the period is given (pp. 34-78). Ottoman institutions are discussed (pp. 25-33) and a most valuable discussion of the eight relevant Ottoman chronicles used for this compilation precedes the main body of the text. Mrs. Reindl demonstrates upon good argument that the olim Köprüllü ms, ascribed by some to Rühî, is in fact an Oruç text (pp. 12-15) (now in the collection of the Yapi ve Kredi Bankası Halk Kütüphanesi at Istanbul-Binbirdirek).

Lists of grand-viziers and beylerbeys of Rumelia and Anatolia conclude the work. No listings are given of other high officials of state nor did the author in any way wish to give us a chance to indicate the various interrelationships and family links of the persons dealt with (cf. p. II). This task then is left for the users of the book!

One would wish to have such a biographical lexicon, in Ottoman style but compiled according to modern critical philological and historical method like this one, on all the Ottoman style but compiled according to modern critical family links of the persons dealt with (cf. p. II). This give us a chance to indicate the various interrelationships an Oruç text (pp. 12-15) (now in the collection of the Yapi ve Kredi Bankası Halk Kütüphanesi at Istanbul-Binbirdirek).

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One would wish to have such a biographical lexicon, in Ottoman style but compiled according to modern critical philological and historical method like this one, on all the early Ottoman reigns. This one should be available in all scholarly libraries.