



### **Ishaq al-Hroub (1941-2025)**

Ishaq al-Hroub was born in 1941 in the village of Deir Samit, by Dura, west of Hebron. He died on June 26 at Alahli Hospital in Hebron from lung failure. He grew up in a traditional Palestinian peasant family. His father was socially active in solving disputes and family conflicts in the village. While his mother, besides raising kids and animals, was leading the traditional songs in weddings and ceremonies. Ishaq also learned many traditional crafts from a young widowed aunt.

The Nakbah in 1948 shaped Hroub's views about his society and heritage. He saw how modern technology was replacing traditional mode of life. There were hundred thousands of Palestinians displaced and living in refugee camps. With the salary he earned as a teacher, al-Hroub bought hundreds of objects which those persons took with them but didn't use anymore in the new, rather urban context of the camps in Jordan and Palestine.

Hroub's collection is one of the largest in the field of Palestinian ethnography and the result of lifelong, passionate dedication. For a while, it was on display at Murad Castle near Solomon's Pools. Part of it is now exhibited in his house in Deir Samit. But Ishaq did not stop at collecting. He described his collection with detailed commentary. This includes the first-ever documentation of the seven-day wedding, in both its Fallah and Bedouin variants, complete with songs in the local dialect. The way in which he organized all the material is an ethnographic document in itself. Ishaq al-Hroub's life work is a comprehensive description of rural Palestinian culture, written not by a Western-educated scholar, but by the son of Palestinian farmers from southern Palestine. The dramatic developments and changes in this region make his work a unique legacy.

Ishaq al-Hroub, *Atlas of Palestinian Rural Heritage*, was published in 2015 in its first edition and in 2024 in its second edition, bilingual in Arabic and English and illustrated with 575 images, available from Aphorisma-Verlag, Berlin. The edition was supported by the ethnographic department of the BIBEL+ORIENT Museum, Fribourg, Switzerland, whose curator, Thomas Staubli, wrote this obituary.