

## **When the Cemetery Becomes Political: Dealing with the Religious Heritage in Multi-Ethnic Regions Conferences in Münster (24-25 March 2017) and Nicosia (16 March 2018 and 1 November 2019)**

**THORSTEN KRUSE, HUBERT FAUSTMANN, AND SABINE ROGGE (eds)**

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The book being presented by Waxmann publications under the editorship of Thorsten Kruse, Hubert Faustmann and Sabine Rogge, includes the papers of three conferences which were conducted in Münster (24-25 March, 2017) and in Nicosia (16 March, 2018 and 1st of November, 2019) by the Institute of Interdisciplinary Cypriot Studies (University of Münster) in cooperation with the Cyprus Office of the German Friedrich - Ebert Foundation (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, FES). The work grapples with an always relevant matter, namely of the interconnection of religion to politics, focusing on the management of the religious cultural heritage and in particular the case of cemeteries in regions where a greater number of national and religious communities are active. It is particularly interesting that we have a selection of characteristic countries, in which diachronically there emerge issues of coexistence and occasionally of conflict between different religious communities. Subsequently, the book is divided into four units. corresponding to the countries of location of the cemeteries being presented. The first unit concerns Bosnia-Herzegovina, the second Cyprus, the next Greece, and the last Lebanon. All the contributions included in the volume are accompanied by rich photographic material from the cemeteries constituting the subject of each paper. Moreover, at the end of each contribution an extensive bibliographical list is attached with the aim of guiding the reader to a more in-depth knowledge of the individual matters.

The first unit is devoted to Bosnia-Herzegovina and includes the paper by Željana Tunić under the title ‘The meaning of bones in post-conflict societies’. The second unit pertains to Cyprus and is the most extensive, with five different contributions. The first contribution was drafted by Theodosios Tsivolas under the title ‘Cypriot religious heritage. Legal reflections on a divided cultural property’. The second paper, by Th. Kruse, has as subject ‘The fate of the religious heritage of Cyprus in the reports of

international organisations: The northern part of Cyprus'. There follows the contribution by Petros Savvides, 'The Islamization of occupied Cyprus: A religious affair or political engineering?'. The fourth paper's topic is 'The politics of restoring religious sites and cemeteries in the north of Cyprus: An ethnography among Greek Cypriot refugees' and it was drafted jointly by Lisa Dikomitis and Vassos Argyrou. The last is the joint paper by Theopisti Stylianou-Lambert and Alexandra Bounia, analysing the topic of 'Cultural "wars", religious artefacts, and visitors: Icon museums and the Women of St Barnabas'. The next part pertains to Greece, with the contribution by Leon Saltiel, which analyses 'The destruction of Thessaloniki's Jewish cemetery'. Then the case of the country of Lebanon is presented, with three individual papers. In the first Elie Al Hindy elaborates on the matter of 'Religious pluralism –problems and solutions'. This is followed by the contribution by Ziad Fahed, the subject being the influence of religious denominations on the consolidation of peace and bearing the title 'From war to reconciliation –lessons from and for Lebanon: The role of religions in peacebuilding in time of war'. The last study of the unit and of the volume is the one by Dima de Clerck, which focusses on the Christian cemeteries of Lebanon and is titled 'The place of the Christian dead in southern Mount Lebanon'.

In conclusion, this volume constitutes a thorough approach of the ever relevant and difficult issue of the relationship between politics and religion, though not in generality and abstractness, but from a specific and sensitive perspective. How the resting place of the dead, the known to all cemeteries, become a reflection of this relationship and at times of this conflict. This polished publication makes for a fine read and enriches the knowledge of the thoughtful reader. In parallel, it affords an occasion for productive scholarly investigation and further delving into the matters elaborated in it.

**Ioannis E. Kastanas**