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- 1 In view of the tendency among the public at large to suppress issues like 'death and burial', it is all the more remarkable that this very real aspect of our lives should be taken up in Gerhard Höpp's and Gerdien Jonker' anthology. What is more, the topic is dealt here with in relation to Moslem migrants, who, despite being an integral component of society in Europe, still tend to be overlooked by the non-Moslen public. Under the above title, which translates as "In Foreign Soil : Islamic Burial in Germany Past and Present", the history of Moslem burials in Germany and Europe is unraveled (in three contributions) and the various legal, religious, religious-policy and human-emotional aspects of the dying and laying to rest of Moslem migrants in today's Germany are discussed (in five contributions).
- 2 The volume opens with an article examining the interpretation of *shariat* law of the question of Moslem burials in a Christian setting far from home as printed in the advice column of an "agony mufti" in a Saudi daily (Heine). The other contributions deal primarily with Turks. One article looks at the death of Turkish-Ottoman politicians like *Talat Pasa* and his grave in Berlin; in another the graves of the fallen and captured of the Turkish Wars (European-Ottoman wars since 1663) recall the history of the living, i.e. European-Ottoman and German-Turkish history (Heller, Höpp). Other pieces give an

account of burials in the context of German regulations as applied in local authority cemeteries (Kokklelik) or from the viewpoint of the Islamic organisations in Germany (Karakasoglu). Two others deal with the experience of death of Turkish migrant families and the changes in mourning rituals (Tan, Jonker). All these authors focus on Ottoman and above all present-day Turks. Even the general reflections in the final article (Chaib) on the phenomenology of migration, here in connection with death and repatriation of corpses, draw on the empirical database for fatalities among Turkish children in Berlin.

- 3 What kind of Moslems are they? What might a Turkish Moslem say about the *fetva* of the Saudi counselling *mufti*? Do tradition-conscious but secularised Turkish migrants see themselves properly represented in matters of death and burial by, for example, the *imam* of the Islamicist *Milli Görüş* League in Germany? Shaped by the national tradition of state Islam 'at home', practising Moslems from Saudi Arabia, with its system of *shariat* law, are certainly not directly comparable with the believers from laicistic Turkey in matters of faith or even in the expectations they have of the host country, Germany. And whereas the Turks living in Germany are, as in Turkey itself, almost all Moslems on paper, they differ widely in their religiosity. They adhere to different teachings, whether *alevi* or *sunni*. And they differ above all in the role Islam plays in shaping their personal identity. One Turk may have a strictly religious lifestyle, another lead a life based on Turkish customs and traditions but without frequent visits to the Mosque.
- 4 A general introductory remark would have been useful in this book to dispel the prejudice, dearly held by the said non-Moslem public, that "Islam" as such stands behind the behaviour (even in matters of death) of a group of fellow-citizens. After all, what makes this anthology so fascinating is the variety of perspectives that are explored by its contributors, both in the historical analyses as well as in the empirical surveys of data on the present situation. And the empirical evidence is particularly useful in undermining such prejudices.
- 5 We learn, for instance, that political Islamic organisations in Germany apparently respond to the burial problematic created by migration pragmatically with an undogmatic flexibility, completely devoid of the fundamentalism non-Moslems like to attribute to them. Equally encouraging is the flexibility shown in the accounts given by the migrants themselves : they have been able to adapt religious rituals to the changed circumstances and give expression to their grief accordingly. However, it should of course be borne in mind that the sense of moral propriety and custom (*örfl adet*) does not only apply among migrants but also influences the actions of many Turks in Turkey, irrespective of their doubts about the 'right path' of faith.
- 6 A merit of the anthology is that it once again presents -this time with respect to the repatriation of the dead to Turkey, which is still evidently frequent, and the lack of German regulations governing Islamic burials- the whole unresolved problem of Turkish migrants in Germany as an "uprooting". It is clear, irrespective of creed, i.e. whether from a Moslem or Christian or even from a secular standpoint, that migrants cannot feel at home in a society which refuses to let them to bury their dead in accordance with their own customs.
- 7 This volume offers a summary of research papers of the Berliner Zentrum Moderner Orient. One hopes that such an institutions will continue to have the resources required to produce such lively and yet scientifically sound studies on migrants and on their

regions of origin, which are politically and economically linked with Germany in so many ways.

RÉSUMÉS

Under the above title, which is translated as *In Foreign Soil : Islamic Burial in Germany, in Past and Present*, the history of Moslem burials in Germany and Europe is unraveled (in three contributions) and the various legal, religious, religious-policy and human-emotional aspects of the dying and laying to rest of Moslem migrants in today's Germany are discussed (in five contributions). Mostly focussing on Turks living in Europe the authors sometimes seem to forget that a great number of Turkish migrants can follow traditional rules and burial customs without being religious. But what makes this anthology worth reading is the variety of perspectives that are explored by its contributors, both in the historical analyses as well as in the empirical surveys of data on the ways, religious Moslems and also secular Turks deal with burial problems in a Christian surrounding.