



Kırkbudak - Journal of Anatolian Folk Beliefs (2005-2007)

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Summary

Kırkbudak - Journal for the Study of Anatolian Folk Beliefs, published between 2005 and 2007, holds the distinction of being the first peer-reviewed academic journal in Turkey dedicated to the field of Alevism studies. As a pioneering scholarly platform, it featured twelve issues that brought together interdisciplinary contributions examining Alevism and various other folk belief systems in Anatolia through historical, sociological, anthropological, and theological perspectives. The journal established itself as a critical medium for the production of accurate, reliable, and academically rigorous knowledge, consciously distancing itself from ideological biases and responding to the widespread problem of misinformation in the field. Its editorial and advisory boards included a select group of esteemed scholars and emerging researchers from both Turkey and abroad, many of whom were among the few actively engaging with Alevism studies at the time. Kırkbudak offered a broad thematic scope, ranging from the history of Alevism and its expressions in the European diaspora, to contemporary debates on secularism and the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet), and extended its inquiry to encompass other religious traditions such as Nusayrism, Judaism, and Yazidism. In doing so, the journal also functioned as an inclusive academic space for early-career researchers. As such, Kırkbudak represents a foundational institutional effort in the academic study of Alevism and Anatolian folk beliefs. It laid the groundwork for subsequent publications and contributed significantly to the consolidation and intellectual recognition of the field.

Keywords: Alevi Çalışmaları, Halk İslamı, Kırkbudak

Scope, Objectives, and Aims

Kırkbudak: Journal for the Study of Anatolian Folk Beliefs was published between 2005 and 2007. As the first peer-reviewed academic publication in Turkey dedicated to the field of Alevism studies, it opened a scholarly space for the exploration of Anatolia's multi-ethnic and multi-faith belief geographies-particularly Alevism-through historical,

sociological, anthropological, and political lenses. The journal was committed to interdisciplinary approaches, offered opportunities for early-career researchers, and upheld rigorous academic standards. It followed an editorial policy that prioritised empirically grounded fieldwork and critical thinking while remaining independent from contemporary political trends.

Kırkbudak set out to make a scholarly and critical contribution to the growing public and academic interest in Alevism, particularly since the 1990s. It approached Alevism as a historical belief system, analysing its metaphysical dimensions, social institutions, ritual practices, and oral traditions. The journal supported studies that aimed to reinterpret historical data and critically examine contemporary sociological realities.

One of the journal's core aims was to address the widespread issue of misinformation and ideological manipulation surrounding Alevism and related folk beliefs. To this end, *Kırkbudak* sought to disseminate clean, accurate, reliable, and methodologically sound academic knowledge. It created a space for historically and systematically grounded analyses of diverse traditions including Alevism, Sunni (folk) Islam, Bektashism, Nusayrism, Yazidism, Judaism, Christianity, and Coptic Christianity. Importantly, the journal welcomed contributions not only from academics but also from community leaders and local knowledge holders, thereby fostering a multi-layered field of knowledge in the study of folk belief systems.

Additionally, *Kırkbudak* actively supported the participation of young researchers and the development of new empirical studies. In this regard, it functioned not only as a publishing platform but also as an academic archive for the cultural and religious landscape of Anatolia.

Editorial Board and Editors-in-Chief

Between 2005 and 2007, the editorial board of *Kırkbudak* included numerous scholars who have since become leading figures in the field of Alevi Studies. At the time, many of them were still early-career researchers. Among these contributors were: Ahmet Kerim Gültekin (Editor-in-Chief), Besim Can Zırh, Ebru Arıcan, Erdal Gezik, Hüseyin Edemir, İlhan Cem Erseven, Kamil Fırat (Editor-in-Chief), Mahir Ünsal Eriş, Meral Salman, Mesut Özcan, Murat Cem Demir, Z. Nilüfer Nahya, Önder Güneş, Rabia Harmanşah, and Serkan Erdoğan.

Advisory Board

The journal's advisory board was composed of well-established scholars from both Turkey and abroad. Among its members were: Prof. Dr. Bahattin Akşit, Assist. Prof. Dr. Sefa Feza Arslan, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tayfun Atay, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suavi Aydın, Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Bal, Assist. Prof. Dr. Chris Dole, Assist. Prof. Dr. Aykan Erdemir, Dr. Tuğba Tanyeri Erdemir, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Selahattin Erhan, Prof. Dr. Cemal Kafadar, Prof. Dr. Hans-Lukas Kieser, Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Muhtar Kutlu, Dr. Élise Massicard, Prof. Dr. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, Dr. Sibel Özbudun, Prof. Dr. Elizabeth Özdalga, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yağmur Say, Assist. Prof. Dr. Levent Soysal, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Türk, Dr. Mustafa Şen, Prof. Dr. Nur Yalman, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ayhan Yalçınkaya, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali Yaman, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mesut Yeğen, Dr. Abdurrahim Özmen.

Published Issues and Contributors / Articles Issue 1 (Winter 2005)

Hamit Bozarslan "Araştırmmanın Mitosları ya da Aleviliğin Tarihsel ve Sosyal Bir Olgu Olarak Değerlendirilmesinin Zorunluluğu Üzerine" (*The Myths of Research or On the Necessity of Evaluating Alevism as a Historical and Social Phenomenon*)

Nilgün Dalkesen "15 ve 16. Yüzyıllarda Safevi

Propagandalarının Anadolu'nun Dini ve Kültürel Hayatındaki Etkileri; Alevi-Kızılbaş Kimliğinin Oluşumu”(The Impact of Safavid Propaganda on the Religious and Cultural Life of Anatolia in the 15th and 16th Centuries: The Formation of the Alevi-Kızılbaş Identity)

Kamil Fırat”Ankara’da Bir Alan Araştırması: Aleviliğin ve Dinsel Kimliğin Alevilerce Algılanması”(A Field Study in Ankara: The Perception of Alevism and Religious Identity among Alevis)

Ali Yaman”Rus Araştırmacı V. A. Gordlevski’nin Alevilik-Bektaşilik Araştırmalarına İlişkin Düşünceleri”(The Reflections of Russian Researcher V. A. Gordlevsky on Alevism and Bektashism)

Ahmet Kerim Gültekin”Beyşehir Gölü Havzasından Tunceli Dağlarına İnsan Toplumsallığının İzdüşümü Olarak Söylenceler Üzerine Bir Deneme”(From the Shores of Lake Beyşehir to the Mountains of Tunceli: A Reflection on Folkloric Legends as Projections of Human Sociality)

Aykan Erdemir & Tuğba Tanyeri Erdemir”Pinhan Tarih: Alevilik, Antropoloji ve Arkeoloji”(Hidden History: Alevism, Anthropology, and Archaeology)

Issue 2 (Spring 2005)

Aykan Erdemir”Avrupa Komisyonu Raporlarında Aleviler”(Alevis in European Commission Reports)

Aykan Erdemir & Ahmet Kerim Gültekin”Avrupa Komisyonu Türkiye Temsilcisi Büyükelçi Hansjörg Kretschmer ile Alevilik Üzerine Görüşme”(A Conversation on Alevism with Ambassador Hansjörg Kretschmer, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Turkey)

Aykan Erdemir & Ahmet Kerim Gültekin”An Interview on Alevism with Ambassador Kretschmer, Head of the European Commission Delegation to Turkey”(Original English Title)

Besim Can Zırh"Avro – Aleviler: Ziyaretçi İşçilikten Ulusötesi Cemaate"(Euro-Alevis: From Migrant Labour to a Transnational Community)

Mustafa Şen & Sefa Feza Arslan"AB, Aleviler ve Türk-İslam Sentezi"(The EU, Alevis, and the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis)

Ahmet Kerim Gültekin"Fakirlikten Sultanlığa: Anadolu İslam Heterodoksisinin Gelişim Sürecinde Bir Geçiş Dönemi Söylencesi"(From Poverty to Sainthood: A Transitional Legend in the Development of Heterodox Islam in Anatolia)

Stefano De Martino (translated by Serkan Erdoğan)"Hitit Anadolusu'nda Müzik, Dans ve Alaylar"(Music, Dance, and Processions in Hittite Anatolia)

İlhan Cem Erseven"Alevi Dergilerine Bakış"(A Survey of Alevi Journals)

Issue 3 (Summer 2005)

Ahmet Kerim Gültekin & Yüksel Işık"Diyanet İşleri Başkanı Prof. Dr. Ali Bardakoğlu'yla Söyleşi"(An Interview with the President of the Directorate of Religious Affairs, Prof. Dr. Ali Bardakoğlu)

Av. Hıdır Özcan"Laiklik Açısından Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı"(The Directorate of Religious Affairs from a Secularism Perspective)

Özgür Sarı"Türk Laikliği, Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı ve Aleviler"(Turkish Secularism, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and Alevis)

Zeki Uyanık"Diyanet'in Alevilik Söylemi veya Entegrasyonist Misyonerlik Politikaları"(The Diyanet's Discourse on Alevism or Policies of Integrationist Missionizing)

İlhan Cem Erseven"Diyanet, Din Dersleri Sorunu ve Aleviler – Zorunlu mu Olsun, Sorunsuz mu?"(The Diyanet, Religious Education Classes and the Alevis: Should They Be Mandatory or Unproblematic?)

İbrahim Bahadır" Türkiye'de Uluslaşma, Laiklik ve Aleviler" (*Nation-Building, Secularism, and Alevi in Turkey*)

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Aykan Erdemir”Mütekevvîn Alevilikler: Kent Koşullarında Dönüşen Cem Uygulamaları”(Forming Alevisms: Transformed Cem Rituals in Urban Settings)

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Hüseyin Edemir”Milliyetçi Söylemin Alevilik Yazımı Üzerine Etkisi: Kürt ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinden Karşılaştırmalı Notlar”(The Influence of Nationalist Discourse on the Writing of Alevism: Comparative Notes on Kurdish and Turkish Nationalisms)

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Mahir Ünsal Eriş”Kültürel Müslümanlığın Türkiye Yahudiliği Üzerindeki Etkilerine Dair Bir Deneme”(An Essay on the Effects of Cultural Islam on Turkish Jewry)

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Ali Yaman”Uluslararasılaşan Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi Dersleri Sorunu ve Konunun Almanya Boyutuna Genel Bir Bakış”(The Internationalisation of Religious Culture and Ethics Courses and a General Outlook on the German Case)

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Barış Başaran" *The Sociological Dimensions of Sectarianism*" – Book Review

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Karen Gerson Şarhon" Türkiye'nin Zengin Mozağının Bir Parçası: Ladino ya da Judeo-Espanyol, Nam-ı Diğer Yahudice" (*Part of Turkey's Rich Mosaic: Ladino or Judeo-Spanish, Also Known as 'Jewish' Language*)

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Mahir Ünsal Eriş" Rabi Nisim Behar'ın Yahudi Kadınına Hitaben Yazdığı La Kaza Cudia Kitabı Üzerine" (*On Rabi Nisim Behar's Book La Kaza Cudia Addressed to Jewish Women*)

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Turkish Jewry: Obstacles, Opportunities, and Sources)

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Events

Kırkbudak functioned not only as an academic journal but also gained public visibility through events it organised on Alevism and various folk belief systems. Panels and gatherings held in Ankara and Istanbul in 2006 reflected the journal's strong ties with the academic community.

11 October 2006 - Panel: "Alevism, Sunnism, and the Directorate of Religious Affairs" Venue: Ankara University, Faculty of Language, History, and Geography, Muzaffer Göker Hall

Organised by: Cultural Studies Society

Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tayfun Atay

Participants: Asst. Prof. Dr. Sefa Feza Arslan, Dr. Mustafa

Şen, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tayfun Atay, and Kamil Fırat (Editorial Board Member)

The presentations and discussions during the panel critically addressed the multifaceted relationship between Alevism and Turkey's official religious institutions, particularly the Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı).

16 September 2006 - Second Anniversary Reception of Kırkbudak Journal Venue: Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation, Exhibition Hall

These events demonstrated that *Kırkbudak* was not limited to the production of written knowledge; rather, it played an important role in fostering social engagement within both academic and cultural spheres.

Conclusion

Kırkbudak: Journal for the Study of Anatolian Folk Beliefs (2005-2007) was not only the first peer-reviewed academic journal in Turkey dedicated to the study of Alevism, but also a pioneering publication that paved the way for what has now become an internationally recognised field of Alevi Studies. Both in terms of the quality of its articles and the opportunities it provided for emerging scholars on its editorial board, *Kırkbudak* embodied a vision that was ahead of its time.

Beyond Alevism, the journal created a scientific framework for the study of Anatolian folk belief systems, approaching their multilayered structures through historical, sociological, anthropological, and cultural lenses. It adopted an independent, interdisciplinary, and critical stance at a time when political debates in Turkey could easily sway academic discourse. By prioritising empirical research, encouraging early-career scholars, and giving voice to local knowledge holders, *Kırkbudak* cultivated an original space for knowledge production.

Many scholars who are now recognised figures in Alevi

Studies published their earliest works in *Kırkbudak*. The journal played a pioneering role in fostering the intergenerational transmission of scholarly production. Figures such as Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, Besim Can Zırh, Erdal Gezik, and Rabia Harmanşah are among those who shaped their subsequent academic trajectories through their contributions to the journal.

More than just a journal, *Kırkbudak* demonstrated that knowledge on Alevism could be produced and shared with the public in a format that was free from ideological distortion-one that was accurate, reliable, critical, and academically sound. Over the course of twelve issues, it raised fundamental questions grounded in both historical sources and contemporary concerns, and pursued their answers with scholarly rigour. Today, while institutional journals, research centres, and academic programmes are firmly established in the field, *Kırkbudak* is still remembered as the seedbed of Alevi Studies-one that continues to shed light not only on the past but also on the present.