

## WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM TRADITIONAL AND NEW ALEVI  
INSTITUTIONS 25-26 JANUARY 2018, CERES CONFERENCE  
BOCHUM

Ali YAMAN\*



A very productive scientific event with participation of expert scholars, took place in Ruhr-Universität Bochum on January 25-26, 2018. The Ruhr-Universität Bochum, founded in 1965, is the fifth-biggest university in Germany and has more than forty thousand students. The university owns a significant collection of important works from Mediterranean region presented in its museum.

\* Prof. Dr., Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi İİBF Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü Bolu. yaman\_a1@ibu.edu.tr.

Associate professor Mustafa Şen, from Middle East Technical University, and associate professor Levent Tezcan, from Ruhr Universitat Bochum, undertook a leadership and organization of the workshop entitled «Traditional and New Alevi Institutions». The workshop was carried out as part of the project *Käte Hamburger Kolleg Dynamics in the History of Religions* conducted by the University. Prof. Ali Yaman, researcher Ibrahim Bahadır, Jun. Prof. Dr. Handan Aksünger, Deniz Coşan-Eke MA, Assoc. Prof. Robert Langer, Besim Can Zirh PhD, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump PhD, Assoc. Prof. Riza Yildirim ve Assoc. Prof. Mustafa Şen, all known for their studies on Alevism, participated in the workshop.

The workshop in which presentations and discussions were conducted in English, started on January 25 in the morning with the opening speech of Assoc. Prof. Levent Tezcan. Prof. Ali Yaman from Turkey was the first speaker in the first session. The subject of his presentation was the transformation of the traditional ocak institutions to cemevi in the cities in the Republican Period. He used visual materials and documents that he obtained from fieldwork in the rural and urban areas on ocaks and historical events. The second speaker researcher Ibrahim Bahadır analysed the relation between dervish lodges and cemevis. The next speaker was Handan Aksünger from Hamburg. The subject of her presentation was the production and dissemination of religious knowledge by Alevi institution and within she gave information about the German aspect of the subject. Also participating from Germany was Deniz Coşan-Eke. She discussed, in accordance with field studies, the important effects of pir and dede, religious authorities in Alevism, on the Alevism and Alevi movement.

The workshop continued on January 26. The first speaker was Assoc. Prof. Robert Langer and he spoke about the transfer of Alevi rituals between Turkish metropolis, rural areas and Western diaspora. He also provided substantial visual material in his presentation. Besim Can Zirh, participant from Turkey, presented his topic on transformation of funeral rituals over time and gave the examples of different funeral services using video recordings. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, PhD, and Assoc. Prof. Riza Yildirim, both from USA, participated through Skype connection. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump discussed from various aspects the question of whether gender equality, as a distinguishing character of Alevi identity, is a myth or reality. Assoc. Prof. Riza Yildirim analysed the socio-political revival and memory crisis among Alevis between 1950 and 2015. The question of how the new socio-political

environment in Turkey caused a traditional memory crisis has been discussed. The last speaker in the workshop was Assoc. Prof. Mustafa Şen and he analysed the role of Alevi organizations in the conduct of socio-religious life of Alevis. The role of organizing Alevi belief, especially intensified in 1990s, has been discussed.

Together with the participants' questions after the presentations, every presentation has been thoroughly discussed during the workshop. This two-day workshop was a highly productive scientific meeting in which expert scholars discussed the traditional and new Alevi institutions.

