

*Abstract:*

The subject of this work are houses of assembly – *cemevi* at Alevis in Turkey. The current Alevis follow on from the so - called Kizilbash (Qizilbash), who lived in the territory of the Ottoman Empire and the teachings of the mystical order of Bektashi, which was associated with the Ottoman Empire and the corps of Janissaries. Contemporary Alevism (*alevilik*), understood either as a religion or as a culture, is a product of the 20th century. *Cemevi* is a house where Alevis gather to conduct their own rituals. Modern day *cemevi* serves as multifunctional religious and cultural center where besides the rituals, teaching takes place and funerals are conducted. In this work I pursue the development of houses of assembly, deriving their terminology from two main sources – the form of the Bektashi ritual space (*meydan*) and from the village architecture of the Alevis populated areas. Today's *cemevi* is not only an architectural phenomenon but also a political problem, so I reflect on the Alevis' struggle to equate it with other sanctuaries and describe the focus of Alevis' roots, which in most cases initiate the construction of the *cemevi*. The appearance of the *cemevi* buildings, taking into account the available budget, is influenced by the perception of Alevism of their builders. Part of this work is field research, which was carried out on the *cemevi* in the Turkish cities of Ankara, Bursa, Çorum, Elâzığ, Istanbul.

*Keywords:*

Cemevi, Houses of assembly, Alevism, Alevis, Kizilbash, Bektashism, Janissaries, Ottoman Empire, Turkey, field research, architecture, religion, rituals