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Questionnaire for the Study of Manuscript Collections (Towards a Typology of Manuscript Collections)

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Collections of manuscripts can be of a very different nature. They can be in the possession of an individual, a group of people or an institution, who might use the objects in an exclusive manner or grant the right of access and use to others. Moreover, they can be situated in households or in edifices of particular communities, kept in shelves or stored in boxes, and so on. Surely, there are many more aspects that have to be considered when describing the nature of a collection, e.g. aspects related to its establishment, function or contents. In order to put an emphasis or generalize, one normally classifies a collection in regard to only a few of these aspects. Thus, among others, attributes such as private, public, imperial, monastic, scholarly and priestly are commonly used to describe a collection. But it is not evident at all on which aspect or combination of them a particular attribute is based. For instance, is a collection private in regard to its owner or to its user? And is a collection scholarly in regard to its contents or its use? Besides, at a closer look, some attributes prove less self-explaining as probably assumed. Do attributes like private, public, scientific and religious represent an academic (sometimes anachronistic) abstraction or do they reflect concepts actually existing in a given culture?

1 This paper is the result of a joint endeavor in the SFB 950 project area C "Manuscript Collections and Manuscripts as Collections", carried out by Orna Almogi, Jung Lan Bang, Alessandro Bausi, Antonella Brita, Christian Brockmann, Martin Delhey, Philippe Depreux, Max Jakob Fölster, Michael Friedrich, Harunaga Isaacson, Branka Ivušić, Janina Karolewski, Gidena Mesfin Kebede, Sabine Kienitz, Roland Kießling, Vito Lorusso, Leif Luckmann, Luigi Orlandi, Ahmed Hussein Ahmed Parkar, Dimitri Pauls, Ridder Samsom, Arne Ulrich, Stefano Valente, Duc Liem Vu, Bin Wang, and Hanna Wimmer.

The questions raised above stem from the very fact that in the field of manuscript studies a typology of collections is still missing. What is established in one part of the field, e.g. the study of Ge'ez manuscripts from Ethiopia, does not necessarily correspond with criteria set up for another field, e.g. the Greek manuscript culture in Byzantine Constantinople. Hitherto, the various possible ways applied so far to classify collections have not been brought together to extract a general set of collection types. Another way how to set up a classification of manuscript collections could be that one leaves aside (for the time being) what kind of attributes and types have already been assigned to them, but instead starting with a “thick” description of collections from various manuscript cultures. In the next step, one can compare the descriptions by asking e.g. which kind of overlapping can form a criterion signifying a collection type. One can also try to define types that relate solely to one aspect of a collection's nature, e.g. types highlighting the different forms of the place of a collection.

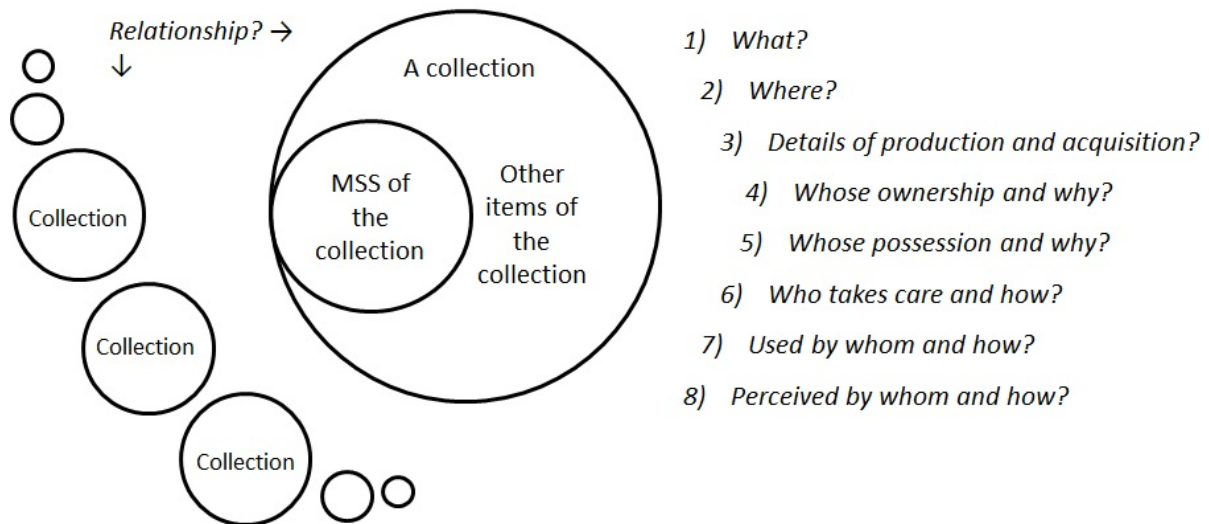
This paper introduces a questionnaire that was designed to allow the comparison of manuscript collections based on standardized descriptions in order to tackle the matter of typology. The questionnaire covers all aspects considered crucial for the understanding of the nature of any given manuscript collection. It can also serve as a practical guide for the study or documentation of manuscript collections. The questionnaire has already been applied as a template at several occasions other than the meetings in the CSMC project area C. For instance, Ridder Samsom (CSMC), Anne Bang (University of Bergen), Susana Molins-Llitas (University of Cape Town) and Hassen Muhammad Kawo (Addis Ababa University) used the questionnaire as a basis for their presentations of various manuscript collections at the round table “The Islamic Archive of Africa” at the *56th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association*, Baltimore, 21–24 November 2013. A brief report on the round table is published in the newsletter of the *Program of African Studies* at Northwestern University, Chicago.² Essays on their four presentations are forthcoming in *Islamic Africa*³. In addition, Max Jakob Fölster (CSMC) made use of the questionnaire when presenting his paper “What is a Library in Early China?” at the *20th Biennial Conference of the European Association for Chinese Studies*, Braga, 22–24 July 2014.⁴

² Rebecca Sherekis, “Panel Explores Islamic Libraries in Africa,” *Program of African Studies* 24.3 (2014), 4. (Online available at <http://www.africanstudies.northwestern.edu/docs/publications-research/newsletters/pas-news-spring-2014.pdf>).

³ See e.g. Ridder Samsom, “The Dissolved Collection of Sheikh ‘Aliy Hemed ‘Abdallah al-Buhriy (1889–1957),” *Islamic Africa* 7 (2015), forthcoming.

⁴ For the abstract see <http://www.eacs2014.pt/admin/schedule/190/paper>.

The questionnaire is almost self-explaining as it appears in the simplified model below which lists its questions and visualizes additionally the possible objects of investigation.



At the centre of the model stands a particular collection that can be divided in two parts: one part for the manuscripts of the collection; the second part for possible other items in the collection, e.g. prints, pieces of art, and so on. On the left side other collections surround the collection in question to point at the fact that in most cases a collection stands in relation to others, e.g. in terms of content and affiliation. The list of questions on the right side can be addressed to the collection as a whole, to the individual manuscripts of the collection, or to the other items. For this reason the questions are put as simple as possible, so that they match for the three alternatives.

In short, the questionnaire asks 1) for a description of the objects collected, 2) for the locality of the collection and the physical circumstances under which its objects are kept, 3) for the matter of production and acquisition of the manuscripts or of all other items of a collection, 4) for the ownership and its purpose, 5) for the possession and its purpose, 6) for those who take care of a collection, 7) for those who use it, and 8) for those who perceive it, but might not use it. Naturally, it is important not only to ask for the people but also how they interact with the collection or how they perceive it.

The questionnaire can be applied to cover the development of a collection, i.e. each question can be answered in its historical dimension, if the available sources permit so. Alternatively, it might be applied to ask about a particular moment in time, in other words for a

snapshot on the collection's time line. Nevertheless, in this case one question still cannot be answered without considering its historical dimension, and that is question 3), i.e. production and acquisition. Answering this question always includes the attempt to trace back the objects' history.

To what extent the questionnaire can be filled in depends on the available sources. These may range from the manuscripts and other items of the collection itself, if still existing, to catalogues and inventories as well as other records that inform us about the items of the collection. As the following two examples of collections from different manuscript cultures will exemplify, there might be more information available about a collection that does not exist any longer than about one that still exists but lacks documentation on many aspects.

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The Collection of the Former Han Dynasty, China

(authored by Max Jakob Fölster)

Introduction

First of all it is important to say that this collection is not extant anymore, not one manuscript from this collection has come down to us. The collection is said to have originated with the establishment of the Former Han dynasty in 206 BCE and probably existed until 25 CE when the capital Chang'an was conquered by rebels, who destroyed much of the city. This probably entailed the destruction of much of this collection. Later, the remains were brought to Luoyang, capital of the Later Han. We only know about the collection from the *Treatise on Literature* (Yiwenzhi 藝文志), a kind of catalogue included as an independent chapter in the dynastic history of the Former Han (Hanshu 漢書). This history was compiled decades after the destruction of the Former Han's capital. The history's compiler, Ban Gu (32–92 CE), admits to not have seen some of the listed works anymore and he clearly states that his *Treatise* is an abbreviated version of an earlier catalogue, i.e. the *Seven Epitomes* (Qilüe 七略) of Liu Xin (ca. 50 BCE–23 CE). This work again is believed to be the final outcome of a major project to assess and

The Collection of Gürgür Dede from Malatya, Turkey

(authored by Janina Karolewski)

The collection presented here belonged to Yusuf Çalışkan (1909–1999), known as Gürgür Dede, who was an Alevi religious specialist (*dede*) from the Eastern Anatolia province of Malatya, Turkey. Like most religious specialists of the Alevi tradition, Gürgür Dede descended from one of the Alevi holy lineages, the *ocaks*. His family is part of the lineage that is commonly named Şah İbrahim Veli Ocağı and has its centre in Ballıkaya (old name: Mezirme), Malatya province. Gürgür Dede was born in Ballıkaya, but, still in his childhood years, his family moved to Alvar, another village in the region. Ali Çavuş (1863–1917), the father of Gürgür Dede, educated him in being a *dede* and taught him reading and writing.

After the death of Gürgür Dede in 1999, his collection got distributed among family members. The main part is said to be with his son Hamdullah (born 1962), known as Hamdi Dede, who acts now and then as religious specialist and lives in Malatya.

collate this collection which began in 26 BCE under the direction of Liu Xin's father Liu Xiang (79-8 BCE) and lasted at least 30 years. Apart from father and son Liu at least three further specialists as well as a large number of various assistants were involved in this undertaking. In the beginning, short reports (lu 錄) on each work were composed, in which collating and editing were described in much detail, and in form of memorials handed to the emperor. These editorial reports were the basis for Liu Xin's *Seven Epitomes*. Unfortunately both reports and Liu Xin's catalogue are long lost. Apart from the *Treatise on Literature*, which is essentially based on these former works, only fragments in form of quotations and eight more or less complete reports, transmitted as prefaces to the respective works, are available.

1. What are they?

The *Treatise* ends with an overview on the content of the listed material. According to this the works listed amount to 13,269 scrolls (juan 卷) arranged in six main and 38 sub-categories. The main categories range from the canonical works (liuyi 六藝), various philosophical writings (zhuzi 諸子) and different forms of poetry (shifu 詩賦) in the first three categories to military handbooks (bingshu 兵書) in the fourth, various

Also another son of Gürgür Dede holds various items from the collection in his possession, but he has left Malatya and lives in western Turkey.

Since Gürgür Dede was and still is well-known in the region and even beyond, there are some short publications about him, but his collection is not mentioned in particular and, most probably, it has never been documented when Gürgür Dede was still alive. So far, the author had twice the chance to examine some items of the collection, namely those that are still in Malatya with Hamdi Dede. The books that are in the possession of his other son were not examined yet.

The part of the collection that was with his son Hamdi Dede in 2008 consisted of about 25 books, sometimes only textblocks or gatherings, torn out of the bound book. Most books are in Turkish written in Perso-Arabic script, only some are in Arabic.

Among the books are at least six manuscripts, which were documented in 2008 and 2013 by the author: 1) A notebook in the so-called *cönk* format (oblong folia bound on the short edge and

works on astronomy, calendars and divination (shushu 數術) in the fifth and medical and pharmaceutical writings (fangji 方技) in the sixth category. The number of works is not given, and is actually not so easy to establish since in some cases it is not clear, whether an entry points to more than just one work. In my count there are 632 works.

13,269 scrolls does not seem much, especially compared to the famous and roughly contemporaneous library of Alexandria, which at most is said to have contained 700,000 scrolls. Apart from the considerable problem of comparing these two numbers, one also has to bear in mind that the *Treatise on Literature* only gives account of the final products of the collation project. A look at the extant editorial reports shows that Liu Xiang made use of much more material, mostly taken from this collection but also including manuscripts from other sources. All of the reports mention duplicate material that was discarded in the process of collating. On basis of this information it has been estimated that the total amount of the collection must have been 5 to 10 times higher than the given 13,269 scrolls, which would mean something between 66,000 and 132,000 scrolls. However, it remains unknown what happened to this duplicate material.

There is no clear indication on the material of the manuscripts in the *Treatise*, but most manuscripts in the collection probably were made

filled with text running parallel to the spin), containing mainly religious poetry and several prayers in Turkish, undated, no scribe mentioned. 2) A multiple-text manuscript in book format, containing religious poetry, a text on Arabic grammar, and others in Turkish; two dates, given according to different calendars respectively, but they contradict each other (1913/14 and 1894); scribe: Ali Çavuş, the father of Gürgür Dede. 3) A multiple-text manuscript, containing religious texts in Turkish, partly written in verse, dated 1906, place: Arguvan, a locality in Malatya province. 4) A book with the versified work *Faziletname* by the poet Yemini (16th cent.) in Turkish, dated 1805, place: Kangal, a locality in Sivas province. 5) A multiple-text manuscript, very small format, containing various short prayers for talismanic use in Turkish and Arabic, no date, no scribe mentioned. 6) A book with the partly versified work *Risale-i Virani* by the poet Virani Baba (16th/17th cent.) in Turkish, dated 1903, scribe: Ali Çavuş, the father of Gürgür Dede.

The other books in the collection are printed works. There are several exemplars of the Quran in Arabic, its interpretation (*tefsir*) in Turkish, a little booklet containing a collection of popular verses of the Quran (“Enam-i Şerif”) in Arabic, a book explaining religious norms (*ilmihal*) in Turkish, and a narration about the Prophet

of bamboo. At least the editorial reports clearly refer to bamboo manuscripts and also the vast majority of excavated manuscripts from that period are made of bamboo or wooden slips that were bound together so that they could be rolled up in scrolls. Nonetheless, one cannot rule out that the collection might have also included silk manuscripts. And some scholars actually argue that the final versions of the collation project were copied onto silk.

2. *Where are they?*

The collection was located at the imperial capital in Chang'an. Different historical sources mention up to seven different places (often names of specific buildings) within the imperial palace complex, where manuscripts were stored. However, the information we have is obviously not from one point in time, so the collection might actually have been moved from one to another place over the course of time. This seems plausible especially considering that the imperial palace was continuously expanded throughout the history of the Former Han. At the same time, this could alternatively mean that there always was more than just one collection within the palace. Maybe it was only with the collation project that one unified imperial collection came into being.

Muhammad (“Hikaye-i Nebi”) in Turkish. Further, there are a book with folk tales, a school book for history and a book with astrological literature (“Yıldızname”), all in Turkish.

In 2008, Hamdi Dede kept his part of the collection of Gürgür Dede in his apartment in Malatya. He stored it in a cupboard, the manuscripts piled up to a few heaps. In the bookshelf above the cupboard, he had placed his own collection of printed books.

It is not known where Gürgür Dede kept the books of his collection. Until he moved to Malatya in the late 1960s, they were most probably hosted in his house in the village. The place of storage within the house could have been a *taka*, a ready-made hollow in the inner wall of a house, or a *sandık*, a chest, as one finds in other cases. It is also unclear where the collection was after Gürgür Dede had moved to the city.

3. How were they produced and acquired?

The introduction of the *Treatise on Literature* mentions different origins for the contents of the collection: Firstly, manuscripts were taken over from the precedent Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE). According to an account in the *History of the Former Han*, they were saved by Xiao He, the most important advisor to the founding emperor of the Han, before the Qin's capital was burnt down in 206 BCE. Secondly, various Han emperors are said to have taken active measures to recover lost writings. Supposedly this was first initiated by Liu Bang, the founding emperor of the Han. However, it is obvious that the introduction is designed to paint a certain picture of the Han emperors as supporters and patrons of scholarship which does not necessarily correspond to other accounts of their attitudes. It begins with describing how after Confucius' death the true teaching became more and more corrupted and was gradually lost. The Han emperors' efforts to restore writings are clearly put into the context of reconstructing this lost true teaching. The most prominent effort in this context is of course that of the collation project, which equally went along with an active recovery of lost writings. However, there is contradictory information on whether the collation project was

It is known that Gürgür Dede used the books that his father Ali Çavuş had written and read. This happened already in his teens when Gürgür Dede started his activity as religious specialist. Before, his father had taught him reading and writing in the Perso-Arabic alphabet, as Gürgür Dede explained once in an interview. Ali Çavuş himself had received training in reading and writing during his military service in Yemen (second half of the 19th cent.). After returning back home, he worked first in Ballıkaya and later in Alvar as a teacher. Concerning his books, it is unclear in how far Ali Çavuş was involved in handicraft activities such as binding quires, preparing ink or producing a book cover for the manuscripts. At least two manuscripts of the collection were written by Ali Çavuş and must have passed over to his son Gürgür Dede, maybe together with other books. In one short publication about Gürgür Dede it is mentioned that he took all the books of his father Çavuş, read them and studied their contents. Still, it is possible that e.g. Mustafa Dede and Şah Hüseyin Dede, two brothers of Gürgür Dede, did also inherit books from their father, who died when they

the result of the active recovery or whether the search for more material was the result of the collation project. Further ways of acquisition may be added: There are the famous cases of manuscripts in old script which were found hidden in walls and presented to the court. At the same time manuscripts were produced at court as well, among these the manuscripts that were the final product of the collation project.

4. Who owns them and for what purpose?

Although there is no clear information on the ownership of the manuscripts, it seems probable to assume that they were officially owned by the emperor. At least terms like “secret writings” (mishu 祕書) or “writings of the centre” (zhongshu 中書), used for them, without doubt refer to the emperor. The purpose to own them must be related to the

were still young.

As for the acquisition of other manuscripts in the collection of Gürgür Dede, one can only make guesses. Since it is obvious that books were passed on within the family, manuscripts that were written in villages other than Alvar could have been acquired by Gürgür Dede, by his father Ali Çavuş or, even before, by another family member. The fact that two manuscripts were written in Arguvan and Kangal, localities which are known as settlements with Alevi population, might confirm what Hamdi Dede, but also other family members stated: Gürgür Dede was in regular contact with other religious specialists, especially from his own *ocak*, and they exchanged, borrowed or gave away books in order to circulate written knowledge.

In general, one could say that the owner of the collection (or of parts of it) is the same person as its possessor (see question 5). But there is also the concept of collective ownership. This collective is represented by the family of Gürgür Dede and, on a higher level, by the respective holy lineage, the Şah İbrahim Veli Ocağı. The mem-

control of knowledge. Not only for prestigious reasons, as a demonstration of power and its implications for legitimation but also for more practical reasons. Military knowledge, for instance, was crucial for the security of the dynasty. And there is clear evidence that the request by a regional king to get access to the collection was declined exactly for the reason that it contained knowledge that might be used against the dynasty.

5. Who possesses them and for what purpose?

As has been said above, the emperor can be understood as the official owner, but this does not exclude that the manuscripts could be in the possession of others. For the collation project one has to assume that the manuscripts were then in the possession of the involved scholars. And what about the manuscripts used for collating that were of different origin, for example those from government agencies outside the inner palace? These must have been in the possession of the officials working there, but were they also the owners or was everything at least nominally owned by the emperor? This also leads to the open question, whether to assume one large collection or different smaller collections.

bers of the family own books in order to preserve and impart religious knowledge, which can be of particular importance for their family tradition. Furthermore, the books symbolize the status and knowledge of the religious specialists and their families.

Gürgür Dede was the possessor of his collection and now his son Hamdi Dede is the possessor of the parts of the collection that are with him. Gürgür Dede possessed the books in order to acquire and preserve knowledge. Since Hamdi Dede cannot read the Perso-Arabic script, the texts written in the books do not impart knowledge to him, but he respects them as bearers of knowledge and acts as their guardian. The collection is also a symbol for his descent of a holy lineage and serves the purpose of personal memory of his deceased father.

6. *Who cares for them and how?*

With the collation project, a certain Chen Nong, about whom we know nothing more than his name, was put in charge to recover lost writings in the entire realm. This seems to have been a singular event and there was no special office for this task. The only permanent official in connection with the secret writings (mishu 祕書), the term most frequently used to denominate the manuscripts of this collection, is an official under the title “palace assistant secretary” (zhongcheng 中丞). Only by the Later Han (25–220 CE) there is evidence of an “office for the supervision of the secret writings” (mishu jianguan 祕書監官).

Concerning the collation project, it is to be assumed that the involved people also took care of the manuscripts. There are no indications, on how the collection might have been physically arranged, but it does not seem unlikely that in the course of the project the manuscripts were organized according to bibliographical categories, as was the case in later periods. However, one can only speculate, whether the categories of the *Treatise on Literature* also served as a means to locate works within this arrangement.

It is not known how Gūrgūr Dede had organized his collection or how he tried to conserve both the textual contents and the manuscripts themselves. In 2008, Hamdi Dede took care of his part of the collection by supplying a storage place. He guarded the books, was careful about whom to show, and never lent them. It is not clear if he has assigned a certain order to them, but he can distinguish some of them according to their differences in appearance (e.g. a very small book or one with many loose leaves). Although he cannot read the texts contained, he tried to have torn out leaves put again into the correct order. There are also several books in the collection the damaged pages of which have been repaired with adhesive strip. These repairs could have been done by Hamdi Dede, Gūrgūr Dede and others.

7. Who uses them and how?

The access was obviously restricted, as is illustrated by the above mentioned case of a regional king who was declined to consult the collection (see question 4). In fact, it seems that many of the works stored in the inner palace only became accessible with the collation project. The people involved in this project, above all Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, evidently had access to the manuscripts and worked with them. Apart from Liu Xiang as head of the project and responsible for the works subsumed under the first three bibliographical categories, the *Treatise on Literature* mentions three further specialists for the three final categories: a general for the military writings, the court astronomer for the category on calendrical and divinatory writings, and the court physician for the medical literature. Besides these men, many more people seem to have been involved as assistants, scribes and in other functions. Eight of these people are known by name, mentioned in the extant editorial reports and elsewhere.

The editorial reports are clearly styled as memorials to the emperor. All reports include a detailed account of the collating. Furthermore, the reports include an assessment of each work in terms of their content. It is quite clear that this was based on their usefulness as a guide to the

Gürgür Dede used his books for reading, but it is not clear which other reading practices he performed besides studying on his own. Most probably, he arranged meetings among his followers at which he read from books to those who were not literate in order to educate them in the Alevi teachings. But it is said that he trained at least one person from the village to be his assistant for religious services. For this purpose he taught his assistant reading and writing in the Perso-Arabic alphabet to allow him access to written texts.

For Gürgür Dede, reading was an essential part of becoming a *dede*. As one of his grandsons recalled once in an interview, Gürgür Dede used to recount how he was not taken serious as *dede* when he had started this activity at the age of thirteen. After he had read and studied all the books of his father Ali Çavuş, he had the knowledge to be accepted as a religious specialist.

Hamdi Dede does not use the books from his father for reading since he is not familiar with the Perso-Arabic alphabet. He makes use of them for representative purposes by exhibiting them e.g. to members of his family and holy lineage. But he owns many other

emperor. In one of the reports the respective work is directly recommended as a reading to the emperor. From this, it seems that the main aim of the whole collation project was to assess all of the literature found in the collection on its utility for the emperor's task of governing the country. One might therefore conclude that the manuscripts produced were intended for the personal use of the emperor. And indeed one of Liu Xiang's assistants is mentioned to have regularly read to the emperor from these, for which he was rewarded with copies of manuscripts from the collection.

8. By whom is it perceived and how?

How this collection was perceived at the time of its existence is difficult to say. But it definitely left behind a great legacy. It is regarded as the first large collection in Chinese history and in its importance for the Chinese tradition is comparable to that of the famous library of Alexandria in the West. Already the fact that Ban Gu included the *Treatise on Literature* as a chapter in his dynastic history attests for the importance the collection was accorded to. Furthermore, the *Treatise* was the first of its kind and served as a model for similar bibliographic chapters in later dynastic histories. Liu Xiang and Liu Xin, the heads of the collation project, by which the collection, as it is presented, was created, are cele-

books with Turkish texts in the Latin alphabet, which he uses for studying the Alevi tradition.

Those who know about the collection of Gürgür Dede are usually Alevi related to his family. Gürgür Dede, or later Hamdi Dede, used them in front of them, showed the books to them or told them about the writings. These Alevi perceive the writings as a proof that Gürgür Dede has acquired the knowledge necessary to fulfill the office of religious specialist and that he also transmitted this knowledge to his son Hamdi Dede. But they also see the manuscripts as evidence that the Alevi tradition, which sometimes is said to have no "holy book" or make use of oral transmission only, owns writings.

brated not only as the first librarians, but also as the fathers of bibliography (muluxue 目錄學) and the inventors of textual criticism (jiaochouxue 校讎學).

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