

Sub-project C04

Buyruk Manuscripts in Alevism: Multiple-text Manuscripts as Bearers and Transmitters of Religious Knowledge at the Interface of Literacy and Oral Culture

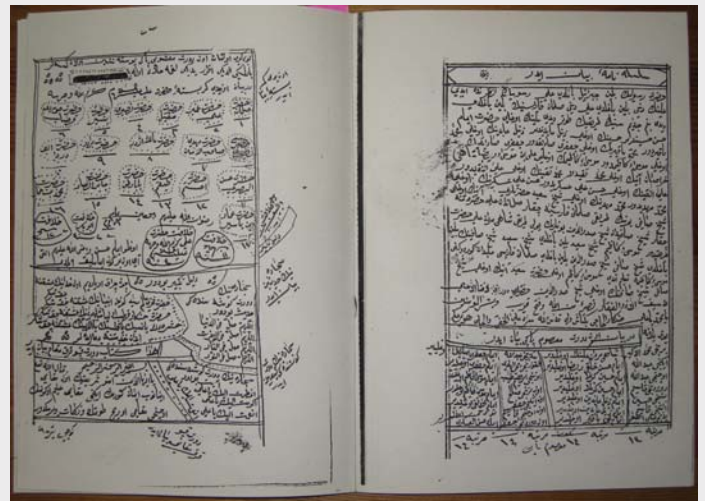
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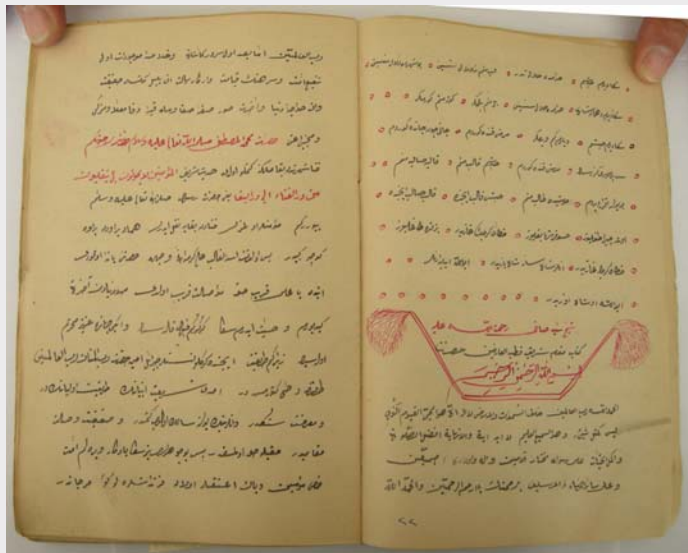
Alevi manuscript culture and Buyruk manuscripts

Due to the religious and social marginalisation of Alevi communities in the Ottoman Empire, the Alevi manuscript culture partly developed autonomously or only in loose contact with other manuscript cultures. Moreover, the predominantly rural environment of religious lay persons was strongly influenced by an oral tradition, and access to written works, including manuscripts, was almost exclusively reserved for the families of religious specialists .

Buyruk manuscripts are multiple-text manuscripts. As one-volume libraries and corpus organisers of texts central to Alevi tradition, however, they vary in form and content depending on the scribe, author or intended purpose. It is common to find texts which show minor variations from one another, presumably based on common sample texts. Other texts on rituals or religious anthems, for example, appear to have been re-written or taken from the oral tradition. Buyruk manuscripts also served as memory aids or as templates for oral culture.



Buyruk manuscript (1897/1899) with text entitled Menakıb-i Evliya.



Buyruk multiple-text manuscript (1890-93) entitled Menakıb-i Şeyh Safi.

Project Objectives and Agenda

A corpus of thirty Buyruk manuscripts will be examined in detail in order to identify and compare the individual texts which they contain. The organisation of knowledge in the manuscripts will be explored, as will the role of manuscripts in marginalised communities and the manner in which text and manuscript production was influenced by the orally dominated environment and the purpose of writing.

Collaboration with the CSMC and significance of the CSMC for the sub-project

In project area C, this sub-project is involved in establishing the fundamental principles of multiple-text manuscripts and corpus organisation. This is approached by comparing it with sub-projects C05 (Ethiopian Studies) and C07 (African Studies), for example. In project area B, there is close cooperation with sub-project B05 (Arabic Studies.)

As research into Alevi manuscript culture has tended to be neglected in the past, this sub-project will profit from previous codicological research carried out by other disciplines and from working together with these other disciplines to compile joint terminology.