Discovery of Karamanlidika Cultural Artifacts via Social Media Tools: Towards a Digital Repository for Karamanli Memories

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Abstract:

The Karamanlides, also known as Karamanli people, are those who spoke Ottoman Turkish and wrote in Greek characters in Asia Minor during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The Karamanli Turkish community has been forced to leave the country in accord with the 1923 Mubadele. There are also evidences of records of Karamanlides found in rare book libraries and archives in Cyprus, Greece, Istanbul, and Anatoli. The first step of the research was to identify available digital Karamanlides cultural artifacts via social media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube and pinpoint the useful metadata. The next step focused on the analysis of these user generated metadata. Findings suggested that these unique cultural artifacts have been scattered all over the WWW and lack descriptive metadata. The aim of this project is not just the discovery of Karamanlides artifacts, but also the reconnecting of people to their cultural heritage and lost memories via a digital platform. It is hoped that it will facilitate genealogy research among these dispersed people and common understanding of cultural heritage, common cities and shared countries such as Cyprus that remains divided. In this study, Karamanlidika Virtual Library will not be only a repository where Karamanlides artifacts stored, described, and retrieved but also an online collaborative working and meeting space for the descendants of Karamanli heritage exploring and documenting their family history.

Keywords: Karamanlidika, Digital Libraries, Social Media

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Introduction

The emergence of social media has radically enhanced the possibilities for the general public to disseminate their cultural heritage directly and therefore bypass the museums and archives. Libraries, archives, and museums were the sole keeper of the cultural artifacts before the invention of the World Wide Web and especially the Web 2.0. Trained information professionals have processed, described, and made the information resources available for the public who were the passive users of these items. However, over the past few years, libraries and information centers have witnessed a dramatic rise in user participation via Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, photo sharing, video sharing, and tagging.

Furthermore, the World Wide Web provides unlimited visibility for the personal documents and cultural artifacts that remain in the hands of the family members of Diaspora peoples. Computer mediated platforms are often the building blocks of their transcendental homelands. This is one of the most important notions of the Internet, facilitating online cultural exchange and perhaps creating new connections among geographically dispersed communities. This study aims to build a model and community around Karamanlides by using digital library technologies, which other interesting communities could build on this research to construct similar approaches to their heritage. Karamanlides is one of the many interesting communities in need of the creation of a "niche personal/community knowledge environment" as an archetype for similar conceptualizations.

The Karamanlides also known as Karamanli people, are those who spoke Ottoman Turkish and wrote in Greek characters in Asia Minor (Anatoli) during the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was one of the largest multi-ethnic empires lasting from the 14th century to the 20th century. It had territories from North Africa to Europe, from Central Asia in the east, to the Balkans in the west. Although Ottoman Turkish was the official government language of the Ottoman Empire and the most widely spoken language, it was not the only language in use. Until the population exchange in 1923 and some other population migrations, there were areas of concentrated Greek population in various parts of Anatolia such as the Aegean coast, Cappadocia, on the Trebizond region around the Black Sea, Izmir (Smyrna), and in Istanbul (Constantinople). Despite the fact that the official government language was Ottoman Turkish written in Arabic script, the Anatolian Orthodox Christian community (also known as Karamanlides or Karamanli people) published many works in Karamanlidika; some of them published by Evangelinos Misailidis, the Anatoli, or the Misailidis publishing house [1].

Karamanlidika or Karamanli Turkish represents unique characteristics in terms of spoken and the written discourse. The Karamanlidika alphabet often uses some special dots on the Greek characters such as dotted pi and tau, as well as a iota. An example of these special characters is the dotted pi corresponds to a "p" pronunciation of Arabic letter "bi" [2]. The Karamanlidika alphabet, its script, and phonology were studied by Miller [3]. Miller proposed a new transliteration schema in his doctoral thesis. In his seminal work, Kramsch [4] stated that, "Discourses are more than just languages, they are ways of being in the world, or forms of life that integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities." In the same vein, Karamanlides culture is an oral culture and it represents the cultural nuances of its spoken community which is Ottoman Turkish. Furthermore, Kramsch also underlines that orality is acquired naturally in everyday life and literacy is learned in schools, which clearly addresses the complexity of Karamanlidika. Such extraordinary examples of religious and cultural artifacts can be found at the Benaki Museum, the Byzantine Museum and the

Museum of Popular Arts in Athens: The Benaki Museum alone houses some 1,100 of these artifacts of which 600 are religious and liturgical liver and textile. A large portion of artifacts such as ecclesiastical silverware, icons, books and liturgical textiles were brought by refugees to Greece in 1923, specifically from Anatolia and the areas of Caesarea/Kayseri region. It is customary with most of the ecclesiastical donations from the region of Kayseri to be inscribed with religious dedications in Karamanli.[5]. Ballian points out an outstanding example of an inscribed object that adds to our knowledge of the local history: a 1689 Gospel book from Ankara. The Greek Orthodox community in Ankara during the 1800's was almost exclusively Karamanlis who moved from Kayseri area. It is confirmed by the inscription of the silver-gilt cover of the Gospel book from Ankara, which is written in Greek and mentions Kayseri as the place of origin of the person whose memory the silver cover of the gospel is dedicated. As far as concerns origins of the Karamanlidika artifacts they come from three regions: Kayseri, Niğde and Ankara.

Other examples of religious texts are found in libraries in the Northern part of Cyprus. These are 19th century religious publications published in Istanbul. These Karamanlidika religious texts are published both with Greek script and Arabic script side-by-side. Penciled inscriptions indicate that the owner of the bible is a Christian Orthodox living in Istanbul, evidence that there was a population of Karamanlides in Istanbul.

Previous research mostly focused on Karamanlides and the production of Karamanlidika printed works and manuscripts [6], [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14], [15], [16], [17], [18], [19], [20]. Earlier work, Aytac [21] examined the bibliographic descriptions of Karamanlidika printed works and addressed the problems regarding cataloging and classification practices executed by academic and research libraries. In this study, we will examine the digital artifacts such as personal documents, photographs, or cultural artifacts, as the building blocks for Karamanlidika digital library, which are freely available via social media platforms.

Methodology and Data Collection

This section presents the data collection used to address the question: "What are the characteristics of the existing digital records representing Karamanlidika cultural artifacts?" We have used the three most popular social media domains, namely: Youtube, Twitter, and Facebook, to locate some examples of Karamanlides cultural artifacts. This research utilized qualitative methods; particularly content analysis. The first data collection took place from March 7th until March 26th, 2014. The search terms *karamanlidika* and *karamanlides* retrieved 162 youtube videos, 39 twitter messages, and 2 facebook discussion groups. The second data collection took place from February 2nd until February 4th, 2015. The search terms *karamanlides* retrieved 383 youtube videos, 80 twitter messages, and 3 facebook discussion groups while *karamanlidika* retrieved 61 youtube videos, 96 twitter messages, and 4 facebook discussion groups.

The third data collection took place from May 26 until May 29th, 2016. The search terms *karamanlides* retrieved 545 youtube videos while *karamanlidika* retrieved 86 youtube videos. A new twitter account for a popular restaurant called "Karamanlidika" in Athens appears as a noise in Twitter keyword searches. In a similar vein, Facebook keyword search option also brings different articles as oppose to the retrieved items from previous years. Facebook discussion groups are collections of individual postings and comments. A single facebook discussion group may encompass dozens if not thousands of individual/single communications of cultural heritage.

The next step focused on the purposive selection of a few artifacts and analysis of their user generated format metadata. Seven digital artifacts were identified from each data set and examined with the purpose of exploring the common metadata elements. For each of the items, the following data elements were documented: (1) source, (2) tags, (3) language, (4) existence of transliteration in the metadata (5) existence of translation in the metadata, (6) location where the artifact originated from, (7) description of the document, (8) date, and (9) if there is any discussion among the users about the artifact. The data collected from these separate artifacts were presented in a unified summary.

According to number of tags used to describe the artifacts, the most frequently used tag was Karamanlidika 5 (71%) followed by Karamanlides 3 (43%), Karamanlılar 3 (43%), Karamanice 1 (14%), and Karamanlı 1 (14%) in our first data set which was collected in 2014. In our second data set, the most frequently used tag was Karamanlidika 7 (100%) followed by Karamanlides 4 (56%), Karamanlı 1 (14%).

Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study indicated that the existing digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts offer somewhat sufficient data for information search and retrieval. Particularly the social tags assigned by the users displays the description of the content, language and the culture. Another important finding was that there is homogenous usage of all three languages (Greek, Karamanlidika, and Turkish) in the sampled artifacts.

Furthermore, in the first set of data collected in 2014, majority of the items offered a translation and/or transliteration of the description either from Karamanlidika to Turkish or from Karamanlidika to Greek. In addition to that, the YouTube oral interviews had English subtitles. Four out of 7 artifacts had information for the current location. For the artifacts extracted from Facebook, very fruitful and informative discussions among the Facebook group members created valuable metadata. General material description has been used to identify the type of documents; one image from the title page of a book dated on 1784; 2 inscripted stone which seem like a prayer over the entry of a house; 2 photographs (one of them a family photo with the names and the relationships among them, and one of a famous orphanage/monastery in 1911s). Two visual resources retrieved from YouTube also had sufficient tags for retrieval; the oral interview contained some genealogical data that could be used to create family trees.

The second set of data collected in 2015 and majority of the items offered a translation and/or transliteration of the description either from Karamanlidika to Turkish or from Karamanlidika to Greek as well. In addition to that, the YouTube oral interview had Turkish and Greek subtitles. Six out of 7 artifacts had information for the current location. For the artifacts extracted from Facebook, very fruitful and informative discussions among the Facebook group members created valuable metadata. General material description has been used to identify the type of documents; one image from the title page of a book dated on 1830; a rare map presented the United States in Karamanlidika; 2 photographs (one of them a church photo which was built in 1913s) and the other one is the photograph of kitchen utensils dated early 1900s. One baptismal certificate posted on Facebook genealogy forum dated 1910 and an image of a grave stone from 1897 retrieved from Twitter also had sufficient tags for retrieval; the Facebook forum on this particular baptismal certificate contained some genealogical data that could be used to create family trees of the people who lived in the same village. With such a small but diverse sample size, we have an understanding of the general characteristics of the digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts which are scattered all over the World Wide Web. Social media tools such

as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube store these user uploaded Karamanlidika cultural artifacts and or contain more information about Karamanlides culture. However, as seen in the case of 2016 twitter search, the retrieval of these artifacts may become more complicated with the increasing number of user generated data. There is an absolute need for the storage and of retrieval of these artefact from a more user friendly and a robust platform such as a digital library. Virtual libraries also known as digital libraries, serve in making digital items such as text, image, and, audio visual resources available to users electronically [22], [23], [24]. In this study, Karamanlidika Virtual Library will not be only a repository where Karamanlides artifacts stored, described, and retrieved but also a collaborative working and meeting space [25]. The following part presents the prototype for the Karamanlides Virtual Library. First, the four pillars of the digital library system namely: (1) content, (2) system and network, (3) users and uploads, and (4) management and policy will be examined [26].

The content component of the virtual library consists of three major elements, these are: digital objects, metadata, and annotations [26]. Digital objects could be in text, image, or audiovisual file format. Preservation of cultural heritage practices, such as those found in archival and museum environments have been performed by professionals in the past. However, this will be a collaborative endeavor which aims to produce and exchange knowledge among scholars, historians, librarians, as well as the public through active participation in creating annotations. Smiraglia [27] defines metadata as "structured, encoded data that describe characteristics of information-bearing entities to aid in the identification, discovery, assessment, and management of the described entities". One of the most popular metadata standards is Dublin Core Metadata Element Set (Dublin Core). Using a controlled vocabulary for metadata annotation would be advantageous of enforcing one to one mapping of an artifact and its meaning. The proposed system will have a "many-to-many" mapping between linguistic forms and entities.

The major functions of the proposed system can be listed as: storing, registering, search, and browse [25]. Successful identification of an open source repository software solution is necessary to run the prototype system. Effective use of cloud computing services to host the prototype system is immediate. One of the most important components of the digital library system is the use of language, as either natural language or controlled vocabulary [28]. In an ideal world, no matter what the stored document is in, the information system must provide the users with information search and retrieval options in their preferred language [29]. Two basic issues are involved in the problem of multilingual access: first is the multiple language search and character recognition (manipulation and display), and second is the multilingual document retrieval. Another important issue is the interoperability which is the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange information and use the exchanged information without special effort on either system. Linked data can enable the integration of heterogeneous collections such as individual family archives or non-profit organization archives from all over the world by facilitating existing metadata. The term linked data refers to the practice of connecting entities by using semantic web data structure such as XML, RDF, and OWL [30]. Moreover, the Karamanlidika Digital Library will be committed to making sure users with disabilities have access to all of digital library resources.

The end users of the proposed virtual library will be wearing multiple hats and interact with the system in many different and complementary ways. A possible solution is found in citizen science and in particular in encouraging the many creative and knowledgeable people to tag collective memories. Tagging or social tagging emerged from the Web 2.0 and these

publicly created tags are known as "folksonomies." The term was coined by Vander Wal in 2007. Unlike taxonomies or controlled vocabularies folksonomies are informal. Citizen science is a valuable form of public engagement between individuals and their own cultural heritage. It has been used to encourage individuals to produce their own metadata for many projects. Citizen science is a useful framework for Karamanlides Virtual Library project inviting stakeholders to help with the creating or describing the resources; sharing some genealogical data on this platform. The proposed project aims to provide a virtual venue for connecting people with their Karamanlides cultural heritage; making history an enjoyable and meaningful online activity. What we really want to do is to connect with people who share the same roots. We want them to create and share their own collection and to collaborate on this platform. This platform will also support genealogy research, and encourage the stakeholders to describe and label the geneology data which is already imbedded in the historic records. This activity will assist the Karamanlides people in finding more about their roots. One must also note that the geneology is not just connecting people genetically, it is also reconstructing the past relationships and connections. Most importantly it is connecting souls with their homeland. For such a project, it will be necessary to have some expert transcribers review and approve the work of general public. The Karamanlidika Virtual Library participants will have different roles such as transcriber, editor, arbitrator, etc. Karamanlidika MOOC (massive open online course) will be created for the each individual role and will be freely offered through the platform for the hundreds of thousands of users around the globe.

The management and policy of the proposed system will consist of sets of rules and terms governing the interaction, co-creation, and collaboration among the stakeholders. This will also include to marketing of the system. For instance, the Karamanlides Virtual Library may have monthly exhibits on the opening page for the visitors; an example of such an informative exhibition could be "The History of Karamanlidika in 100 Artifacts" which may consist of uploaded/linked artifacts. Furthermore, once the portal is built, the manifesto will be communicated via different communication channels to seek collaboration and support from the public to unify the Karamanlidika memories. As discussed at the beginning of the section, the Karamanlidika Virtual Library will not be only a repository where digital Karamanlides artifacts are stored but also a collaborative working and meeting space for the people exploring and documenting their family history. A good example of how the genealogical data can be successfully integrated in to this proposed virtual platform is through the Google Knowledge Graph. Google Knowledge Graph successfully facilitates the robust mapping of different metadata sets and aligns them with Google's ontology classes. For instance, group portraits may contain clues to geneology in addition to relationships, economic conditions and social circumstances of the era. Photographs are very useful in constructing and telling stories of Karamanli people because they provide evidence of events including details related to how they dressed, who attended, and the setting of the event. Documents personal artifacts that remain in the hands of the family members may not be published elsewhere. Quantity of that vital source traces of the past of the Karamanlides. Moreover, census records, vital records, the unpublished resources, and cemetery stones can document the names, life dates, and family relationships of the people.

Conclusion

This study aims to build a model and community around Karamanlides by using digital library technologies, which other interesting communities could build on this research to construct similar approaches to their heritage. Karamanlides is one of the many interesting

communities in need of the creation of a "niche personal/community knowledge environment" as an archetype for similar conceptualizations. Computer mediated platforms are often the building blocks of Diaspora peoples' transcendental homelands. The findings of this study show that existing digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts are dispersed all over the WWW; particularly in Social Media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube. These resources lack sufficient descriptive data. Such an analysis helps one understand the nature of existing artifacts and their user created metadata which can be harvested from Social Media tools. Although these conclusions are based on a relatively small sample, it is likely that this would hold for a bigger sample set. Every study has its limitations, and bigger sample may be included in future research.The feasibility of a virtual library to unite dispersed Karamanlides artifacts has been explored and with the help of digital library technologies can be created. A possible solution to obtaining metadata can be found in citizen science which is a valuable form of public engagement with cultural heritage and genealogy that contributes toward a shared, significant goal or research by asking the individuals to undertake tasks which will be driven by pleasure. One of the expected limitations of this project is the inevitably of noise. Such a large scale citizen science project is error-prone and will be noisy due to the fact that it will grow organically through the participation of the public. However, error correction and normalization of metadata should be in the continuous improvement agenda.

Moreover, this proposed platform will facilitate online cultural exchange and perhaps create new connections among geographically dispersed communities. It will facilitate genealogy research among these dispersed people. Karamanli people had neither the time nor inclination to leave an extensive written record of their lives. Therefore, these individually owned/uploaded artifacts might be the best resources to obtain the memories of participants and eyewitnesses to this cultural heritage. Although, gathering information from persons who have first hand knowledge of historical events is not always possible, subsequent generations of these people can distribute these memories by using this proposed platform. The study in this article is preliminary and the proposed approach can be further improved in several ways. A larger sample of metadata will be examined and pilot prototype will be tested. The hope is that this proposed dynamic virtual library space will support the future cultural exchange of Karamanlides collective memory and assist in the development of a richer and fuller understanding of the Karamanlides people. The Karamanlidika Digital Library will be the cultural glue that creates bonds and the cultural knowledge frame for a cohesive Karamanlides community in a distributed world. Future study should explore the ways in which other communities could build on this research to construct similar approaches to their heritage.

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