

MANAGING KARADENİZ MUSIC ARCHIVE (KARMA): FOUNDATIONS, IMPROVEMENTS, AND CURRENT APPLICATIONS

Abdullah Akat¹

Professor, Istanbul University State Conservatory, Maltepe/Istanbul, Türkiye

Özgün Arda Nural²

**Lecturer, Trabzon University State Conservatory, Musicology Department
and Karadeniz Music Archive, Akçaabat/Trabzon, Türkiye**

УПРАВЉАЊЕ МУЗИЧКИМ АРХИВОМ КАРАДЕНИЗ (КАРМА): ОСНОВЕ, ПОБОЉШАЊА И ТРЕНУТНЕ ПРИМЕНЕ

Абдула Акат

**Професор, Државни конзерваторијум Истанбулског универзитета, Малтепе/
Истанбул, Турска**

Озгун Арда Нурал

**Предавач, Државни конзерваторијум Трабзонског универзитета, Одсек за
музикологију и Музички архив Карадениз, Акчабат/Трабзон, Турска**

Received: 15 October 2022
Accepted: 30 November 2022
Original scientific paper

ABSTRACT

KARMA, founded in Trabzon (Türkiye) in 2011, brings together audio-visual archival materials from the Black Sea hinterland. The goal of this article is to promote the epistemological and institutional background and actions of KARMA with its short history, objectives, and current applications for digital preservation. In this context, we will present how KARMA adapts Latour's *actor-network theory*, Deleuze and Guattari's *rhizome*, and Akat's *focus strategy model*. We will also stress the importance of both micro and macro perspectives in order to understand the music cultures of the region through historical collections and new connections.

1 abdullahakat@istanbul.edu.tr

2 karma@trabzon.edu.tr

KEYWORDS: KARMA, Black Sea, music archiving, focus strategy, digital preservation.

АПСТРАКТ

Архив КАРМА, основан у Трабзону (Турска) 2011. године, обједињује аудио-визуелни архивски материјал из регије обале Црног мора. Циљ овог чланка је да се промовишу епистемолошка и институционална позадина и акције архива КАРМА током кратке историје ове институције, циљеви и тренутне примене дигиталне презервације. У том контексту, представимо како КАРМА прилагођава Латурову теорију актера – мреже, Делезове и Гатаријеве ризоме и Акатову стратегију фокуса, те истиче значај микро и макро перспектива, како би се разумела музичка култура регије кроз историјске збирке и нова повезивања.

Кључне речи: КАРМА, Црно море, архивирање музике, стратегија фокуса, дигитална презервација.

INTRODUCTION

The *Karadeniz Music Archive* (KARMA) was founded in 2011 in Trabzon, the center of the Eastern Black Sea Region of Türkiye, with the aim to bring together audio-visual archival materials from the Black Sea hinterland.³ The starting point of KARMA was to collect, preserve and sustainably transmit only the music of the region, in order to fill a gap caused by the lack of sound and audiovisual archiving institutions. The initial thoughts about the establishment of the institution such as KARMA revolved primarily around the need to improve audio-visual archival consciousness in the official bodies in Türkiye.

Although recording and archiving sound were invaluable contributions to the field in the last quarter of the 19th century, the first field recordings in the region were made in 1929 by Turkish scholars from the Istanbul Conservatory (today: Istanbul University State Conservatory).⁴ Then, in 1937 and 1943, scholars based at the Ankara State Conservatory (today: Hacettepe University Ankara State Conservatory) conducted compilation tours and recorded many folk songs from the region.⁵

3 The Black Sea hinterland or cultural basin can be defined as a very large area that has had contacts with the Balkan, Crimea, Azov, Caspian, Caucasian, and Anatolian geographies.

4 It was the fourth compilation tour conducted by the Istanbul Conservatory and it involved the Eastern Black Sea Region of Türkiye. One of the prominent Turkish musicologists Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal, who took part in this tour, published his observations and field notes in the same year with important documentation (Gazimihal 1929).

5 Muzaffer Sarısözen, who was the Chief of the Folklore Archive of Ankara State Conservatory, was the leader of these tours. With one of his partners in the field (Halil Bedii Yönetken), he published the

In 1937, Adnan Saygun carried out independent fieldwork on the eastern Black Sea coast and near Georgian border, and he published a book in the same year.⁶ These were only the pioneering works, and they have been continued with new ones by dozens of Turkish researchers until the present day. Some foreign scholars such as Laurence Picken (1952), Kurt Reinhard (1963 and 1968), and Martin Stokes (1986–1988) also did fieldwork and collected audio-visual recordings in the Eastern Black Sea Region. However, there were serious problems regarding the archiving and preservation of the obtained materials.⁷

In this article, we will discuss KARMA's attempts to sort these problems out and how it has helped the understanding of the nature of the Black Sea music cultures. Within this scope, KARMA's institutional background and actions will be discussed chronologically. Moreover, the epistemological background that shaped the strategies of the archive over the years will be illustrated by specific examples from its collections. In this context, we will present how the work conducted at KARMA adapts Bruno Latour's *actor-network theory*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *rhizome*, and Abdullah Akat's *focus strategy model*. We will stress the importance of both micro and macro perspectives in order to understand the music cultures of the region.

WHAT IS KARMA?

KARMA was designed as a 2-year project,⁸ supported by the Unit of Karadeniz Technical University (KTU)⁹ Scientific Research Projects. The project team consisted of three scholars; Abdullah Akat (the leader), Beyhan Karpuz (an expert librarian) and Mustafa Aydın (an expert on the Black Sea folk music and dance). In the first phase of the project, the physical infrastructure of the archive was constructed and equipped with essential technical devices and software.¹⁰ After hiring two employees to focus on the digitisation of the materials and digital protection, and systematise the core collections, the archive officially opened in 2014. The project team also worked with scholars, collectors, discophiles and others collaboratively, in order to gather recordings related to the different parts of the region, organise new fieldwork projects, and digitize and/or copy audio-visual materials from existing historical collections and/or music market records.

notes concerning these fieldwork projects in the 1940s.

6 Rize, Artvin ve Kars Havalisi Türkiü, *Saz ve Oyunları Hakkında Bazı Malumat* [Some information on the folk songs, instruments, and dances of Rize, Artvin, and Kars Regions], 1937.

7 At that time, some of these collected recordings were put in the archives in Ankara and Istanbul, but they were not accessible to scholars, even worse a significant part of them could not be survived and never be transferred to date, unfortunately.

8 Later, the project support period was increased to three years by the council.

9 Since reorganising of the universities in Türkiye in 2018, KARMA has been handled by the Trabzon University State Conservatory.

10 A working area and a DigiLab within the conservatory and a very useful room in the Central Library of Karadeniz Technical University were arranged for the researchers working on this project.

These research activities mostly stemmed from Abdullah Akat's PhD thesis (2002–2010), in which he examined the process of change in the music of the Eastern Black Sea Region within the framework of (net)tachmental thought (Akat 2010). In a way, the 24 areas which were indicated by Akat formed the basis of the collections in the archive (Akat 2010). These collections start from the Ordu district in the west and continue to the Georgian border at the coastline in the east. This type of classification which is caused by cultural features of the region is analysed in accordance with the valley settlements, but also regional location, demographic structures, ethnic communities, the natural and geographical conditions¹¹ and, of course, agencies. While all the old/new materials obtained from different archives and fieldwork projects were included in the collections according to this model, all the data collected outside of these areas were first stored in a separate place and then analysed and grouped using the same theoretical approach. The new groups established in this way were subsequently either transformed into a new collection over time or continued to be used as supplementary sources in associating networks. The epistemological background of the archive was structured around Bruno Latour's idea (which derives from De Tarde) of developing micro approaches to macro structures (Latour 2002, 9). Latour's *actor-network theory* (ANT) is "a very crude method to learn from the actors without imposing on them an *a priori* definition of their world-building capacities" (Latour 1999, 20). It refers to alternating between two types of equally powerful dissatisfactions of social scientists that can be concentrated either on the "micro-level" (i.e. face-to-face interactions, local sites, participants, agency, individual, etc.) or "macro-level" (i.e. society, norms, values, culture, structure, social context, etc.). The ANT focuses on the movement of change in the subsequent perspectives of social scientists, who have always come to the conclusion that they missed something between these dissatisfactions (Latour 1999, 16–17). Therefore, "ANT is simply a way of paying attention to these two dissatisfactions, not again to overcome them or to solve the problem, but to follow them elsewhere and to try to explore the very conditions that make these two opposite disappointments possible" (Latour 1999, 17).

The Black Sea is a region that hosts many different communities in small areas. For this reason, no matter at what level one looks at the musical cultures of different communities, it definitely leaks to the other. Some performance styles from KARMA's Akçaabat-Düzköy or Mačka collections could serve as examples of this. There are many network clusters with different musical cultures of Rum and Turk communities. Kemençe, davul and zurna are the main instruments that accompany the dance "horon", although these instruments can be played in different styles. However, all these instrumental, melodic and rhythmic characteristics have been shaped by numerous actors/actants from different roots or anonymous for hundreds of years. Therefore, it is much more satisfactory to explain the definition of the nature of these musical cultures in the region through the agent networks that connect each of these

11 Topography, the weather, flora, and biota of the region can be divided in two parts, namely the seaside and mountainous region.

communities and transform them over time, rather than the strained approaches claimed to originate from uncertain roots. Accepting that each of the communities that evolved from tribal communities into modern-day societies has a share in the local culture should be considered as a prerequisite for the survival of that culture. Since these differences actually ensure our survival, it is necessary to look at each experience from all angles (Said 2004, 76). Although the analysis of the process does not require us to focus on the origin, it consists of elements that give life to human or non-human relationships; hence actions called “change” require more thinking.

In this context, Latour (2005) also explains the type of actors and then defines non-human agencies and the object participants in the course of action. If we think of his discourse in terms of music studies, the actor can be derived from everyday life practices; on the other hand, an instrument, an *aşık*, a makam, a ritual, a concert, or a composer can be defined as an actor (Akat 2010). Even a plateau can become an important agent, as demonstrated by KARMA collections.¹² For instance, Kadirga Plateau is a decisive influencer and has an actant role in the music and dance cultures of many communities occupying a vast area. It brings together the Maçka and Ağasar valleys of Trabzon, the Harşit valley of Giresun, and the Torul district of Gümüşhane on the back slopes of the mountain range. Kadirga Plateau transformed all of the aforementioned areas gradually with the tradition of transhumance and plateau festivals that has been going on for hundreds of years.

On the other hand, the network does not correspond either to the society or the structure. The concept of “network” refers to *transformations* such as Deleuze and Guattari’s *rhizome*, and it is entirely different from the popular meaning of the word (transport without deformation, or instantaneous, unmediated access to every piece of information) (Latour 1999, 15). It implies relationships that emerge suddenly from anywhere and establish new networks without any original connection with the place that they originated from (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). At this point, KARMA has been focusing on relationships that change through repetition and imitation rather than the origin, and their reflections in everyday life practices. So, KARMA’s mission has been to bring together the resources that will shed light on the processes of change of the music of the Eastern Black Sea Region and follow the movement of the “actor” and “network” both separately and together.

Over the two-year span, a significant part of the collections recorded in the field by institutions and individuals in Türkiye had been collected at KARMA, which was designed to create the first audio-visual archive regarding the music of the Black Sea. Among them, there were many collections copied from the Radio Archive, Istanbul Conservatory, archives and libraries of other universities. In addition, individual recordings and discographies prepared by dozens of important musicians (or their family members) from various parts of the region, such as Remzi Bekar, Hasan Sözeri, İbrya Özkan Melaşvili, Ali Genç, Şevket Köroğlu and Hakkı Bıyıklı, were also included in the archive. During the first phase, although KARMA seemed to have

12 See some private collections of KARMA collected by Abdullah Akat, Hakkı Yılmaz, Abdurrahman Erdoğan, Şenol Bıyıklı.

fulfilled its goals in the region, it was largely lacking in the standard applications in the world in the field of music archiving. Therefore, it needed to be developed and expanded in every sense.

EXPANDING NETWORKS AND FIRST PERIPHERAL CONNECTIONS

Just like Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of *rhizome*, local cultural products are characterised by immeasurable richness and unquestionable qualities that emerge unconditionally in every environment. One of the main purposes of KARMA has been to collect local cultural products with all of their differences, regardless of how complex they might appear in terms of analysing cultural interactions and changes. With this understanding, the differences that actually unite people were emphasised by tracing numerous created networks. We also ensured the identification and correlation of differences with one another.

The historical and current audio-visual sources that constituted the archive inventory started to show that the networks formed in the Eastern Black Sea Region were gradually expanding towards different areas of the Black Sea. For instance, in 2012, the need to explore the relations between Crimea and the Eastern Black Sea Region arose (for more details, see Akat 2012). Those were followed by the first peripheral connections towards the Balkans in the same year, and then to Caucasus in 2013. The development of these connections has increased the interest of researchers working on the KARMA project in historical sources formed since the early records in these territories. The first ethnographic investigations with audio-visual recordings on music studies in or around the Black Sea were carried out by researchers from countries such as Germany, Hungary, and Russia at the very beginning of the twentieth century.¹³ Therefore, it was necessary to visit the phonogram archives which contained the oldest sound memories of the world and to examine the records to understand the networks that created environmental impact. We conducted research in these phonoarchives and transferred as much material as possible to KARMA.

In this process, Abdullah Akat prepared a new project to build relations with European archives. His proposal was supported by TUBITAK, and he worked in the Berlin Phonogram-Archive in 2013 and 2014 as a post-doc researcher. In Berlin, he found lots of audio-visual materials recorded by Kurt Reinhard in the Eastern Black Sea Region of Türkiye in 1963 and 1968. He also worked on many other collections¹⁴ from the Black Sea hinterland that had been recorded by scholars since

13 Also, significant historical sources were collected in the Balkan countries in the late Ottoman era and then generally in the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, from Northeastern Bulgaria and Dobrudja, there are many recordings housed in the Institute of Art Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. As another example, the Archive of Tbilisi State Conservatory has stored field recordings (the first recording was in 1907) from different parts of Georgia and the Caucasus.

14 These consist of a total of 63 collections, but Akat focused on 9 collections that can be traced through the actor/actant network based on KARMA's existing collections during his research (for

1909¹⁵ (Akat 2015). This work demonstrated that the Eastern Black Sea region of Türkiye and the communities living all around the Black Sea and their everyday life musical practices should be examined in terms of historical, social, and cultural ties, with an aim to present their formation and transformation. Akat's work also highlighted how the Black Sea is important for its surroundings as an agent and how it contributes to cultural mobilisation and intercultural interactions. From there, he also visited some other European archives and tried to establish new relations with foreign institutions and archives on behalf of KARMA. Consequently the archive was converted into a proper data provider to discover the links among the different parts of the Black Sea.

COLLABORATIVE EXPERIENCES

One of the important considerations in the development of archival collections is a collaborating strategy in the fields of education, technology, research, and management. Hence KARMA has done numerous collaborative activities with public and private institutional partners, nongovernmental organisations, and individuals both in Türkiye and abroad.

The first educational cooperation was done with the Berlin Phonogram Archive in 2013. Beyhan Karpuz, from the KARMA project team, was invited to Berlin to study the cataloguing of archival materials and preparing tree data structures for the archive collections. After this collaboration, we reorganised some structural things in KARMA, such as updating the data input fields, and tabs of the web-based software.¹⁶

more details, see Akat 2015).

15 For example, Adolf Dirr (1867–1930) recorded 38 cylinders with a phonograph during his research activities when he stayed in the Caucasus between 1909–1914. Dirr, who was working in the Munich Museum of Ethnology during that period, sent 31 of these cylinders to Berlin in 1914. The records have been obtained from the Abkhas, Laz, Mingrel, Ossetian, Svan, Tatar, Azeri and Turkish communities since 1909. There are 37 pieces in these 31 cylinders and 15 of these pieces were compiled from the Tatars, 9 from the Abkhas, 5 from the Ossetians, 2 from the Svans, 1 from the Turkish people, 1 from the Mingrels and 1 from Laz people. The importance of this collection is that the second largest settlement of these communities after the Caucasus is Anatolia and most of them have lasting relations with the Eastern Black Sea Region. The musical culture of these communities who still live in the Caucasus and have important interactions with the Eastern Black Sea Region, in respect of their dispersion and immigration areas, is still living or its traces can still be seen.

16 Between 2012 and 2016 KARMA used Midas Digital Archiving System which was developed by MikroBeta company in Türkiye (see Figure 1). The KARMA team also worked on the Midas menu that it used and developed and revised the system according to its own requirements with the solution partner.

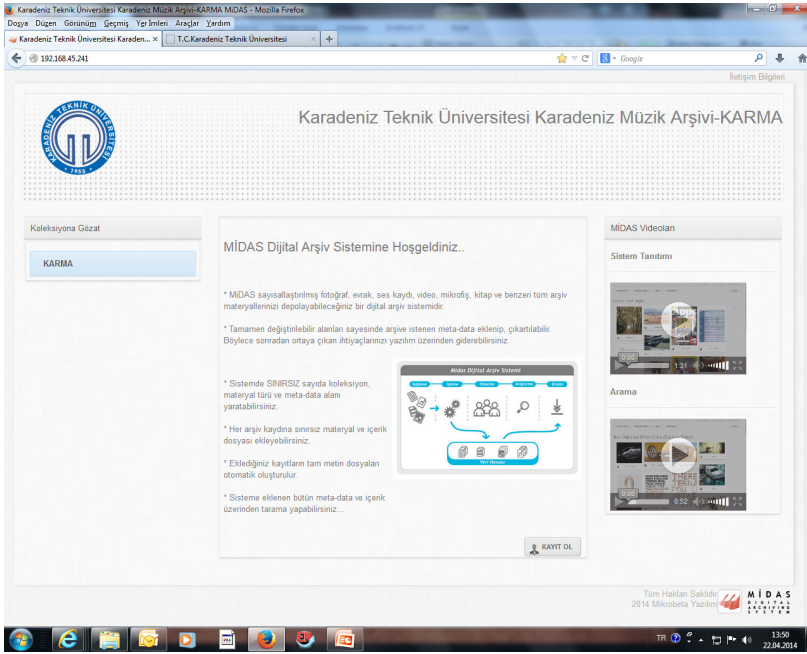


Figure 1. KARMA web based digital archiving system, MİDAS.

The Department of Information Technologies (IT) and the Department of Library Services of KTU cooperated with KARMA in order to build and develop applications for server networking, system management, climatisation, restoration, preservation, and recycling. In addition to the project budget, some of the required facilities and equipment like working rooms, digitisation laboratory, recording studio, uninterruptible power supplies, etc. were provided with the cooperation of the State Conservatory and General Directorate for Construction Affairs of KTU.

After completing the infrastructural issues of the archive, these collaborations have continued with many joint research activities and projects. The first collaborative memorandum was signed with Tbilisi State Conservatory in 2014. It basically included sharing archival materials, organising new fieldwork projects, digitisation works, exchanging experiences, and so on. Within this scope, Turkish and Georgian research teams did numerous joint fieldworks, academic visits, teaching exchanges, traditional music and dance events, workshops, and publications over the 5-year period.

Apart from the archival work such as collection development, digitisation, preservation, and exhibitions, since 2014, KARMA has organised other events with a number of partners – e.g. symposia, panels, workshops, Black Sea Music and Dance Days, and so on. Thanks to these unique collaborative experiences KARMA not only gained its foothold, but also has grown steadily and its scope has been greatly expanded with old and new audio-visual archival materials obtained from different foreign sources.

FOCUSING ON BLACK SEA MUSIC THROUGH KARMA

The Black Sea is generally defined as a competitive field with many antagonisms in its history [Aydın 2020, 12], although there have been many historical and cultural layers and some existing common traditions in its hinterlands. Because of this preconception, it is not an easy task to make collaborations in many fields about the Black Sea. However, on the one hand, KARMA has been trying to change this negative conception and attach these related geographies, communities, and local cultural products like music and dance to each other. So, it can be said that the aim and epistemological background of the archive has also evolved since it was founded and we had to rethink Black Sea music again.

On the other hand, in his recent article *Re-Thinking Black Sea Music: Micro and Macro Perspectives*, Akat asked: “why have Black Sea music studies not been associated, studied together, compared, or discussed by the music circles and academics until today? And, can we define the Black Sea music and mention common characteristics of the music around the Black Sea?” (2021, 230) Akat emphasised the uncommunicative atmosphere of the Black Sea due to politics, incuriousness, economics, and more importantly existing and frozen conflicts, which is why the political borders in the region have never been overcome; however, he argued that cultural boundaries and political boundaries could be defined in quite different ways in the Black Sea region.

In recent times, many audio-visual materials have been collected from the region and some pioneering steps have been taken to shed light on this *circum mare* culture with new archival projects and publications. For instance, Jim Samson did fieldwork in various locations around the Black Sea and tried to narrate the music of the Black Sea hinterlands for the first time in a comprehensive way in his book *Black Sea Sketches* (Samson 2021). Some other maverick studies have inspired different perspectives, e.g. *Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi ile Kırım Arasındaki Sosyal ve Kültürel Etkileşimler* [Social and Cultural Interactions Between Eastern Black Sea Region and Crimea] (Akat 2012); *Karadeniz Havzasında Müzik Çalışmaları ve Kültürel İşbirliği Potansiyeli* [Music Studies and the Potential of Cultural Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin] (Akat 2020); *Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture Around the Black Sea* (eds. David Braund, Edith Hall and Rosie Wyles 2019). Furthermore, it is important that new audio-visual projects have been established in the region.¹⁷

At this point, it is necessary to describe the role of KARMA in terms of both being the first project and offering a unique background as a research archive. A new approach was necessitated by the enlargement of the sizes of the networks examined and cataloged according to Latour’s approach within KARMA, the transformation

17 Aside from KARMA, we should mention the OLKAS Project: “From the Aegean to the Black Sea – medieval Ports in the Maritime Routs of the East” (2012–2013), “Polyphony Project – Unknown Ukraine” (An online archive of musical folklore) (2018), Academy of Music, Theatre and Fine Arts, Moldova – “The Musical Heritage of the Republic of Moldova (Folklore and Composition): Update,

of the expanding networks into intersecting clusters, and the lack of studies and data on these common areas of the intersecting clusters. This need for a new approach was gradually becoming more and more evident with the collaborative research activities carried out after 2014. During the same period, Akat designed a module for undergraduate students at the conservatory titled “Music Archiving”, and some of these students were also working in the DigiLab of the archive in order to gain knowledge and get practice on archival issues. He broadened his focus from area research to the intersectional clusters, and at the same time approached the field from a micro-perspective, both from historical sources and personal experiences. It encouraged him to adopt a “focus strategy”.¹⁸ Akat has adapted this term into ethnomusicological research and used the focus strategy model in archiving through KARMA since 2015. According to his approach,¹⁹

The Black Sea and all fields in the world, including water and airspaces, are within the political competition area of states. These areas of competition appear in different ways through culture and manifest themselves obviously, especially in the ownership of local cultural products. Here, what needs to be done is to overshoot the global and national strategies and focus more on the local. For this, it is necessary to put off all kinds of dilemmas, contradictions, pessimism, and speculation. Capturing differences without any hesitation in cultural backgrounds and musical practices allows us to explore the niche. After that, it is necessary to protect and understand the niche in the local cultural products and refocus on the field after defining the correlations of networks. The decisive thing in refocusing is to trace how the networks expand and where the different networks intersect. Intersecting networks can be numerous and diverse, as well as symmetrical or asymmetrical. In this case, similarity and sameness factors should be taken into account as well as differences. On the other hand, refocusing should not be random; since to focus everywhere means wasting a lot of time for a researcher, refocusing should be based on purpose and network analysis and the focus situation should be repeated as necessary (Akat 2015, Lecture Notes).

The first practice in KARMA through Akat's focus strategy model started with collecting data from the intersection areas of the networks that were determined in the axis of previous studies. In this context, mutual activities such as organising new

Systematization, Digitisation Project” (2015–2019).

18 The focus strategy, which is a kind of competitive strategy, is a term generally used in marketing; it is one of Michael Porter's archetypal three strategies (1980), and it aims to serve the needs of a specific buyer group better than any other competitor. According to Porter (1980, 294–295), the protected niche is one of the ways for competing, like a global or national focus: “The focus strategy always implies some limitations on the overall market share achievable” (Porter 1980, 40), and it refers to the identification of a niche market and the launching of a unique product or service in that market. Therefore, if a company uses a focus strategy, it may concentrate on geographic markets or a particular group of customers.

19 This quotation has been prepared by compiling from Akat's lecture notes and has not been published before.

fieldwork projects and sharing archival data among the partners have been expanded both in Türkiye and around the Black Sea. Therefore, the micro perspective – to focus on the differences, which was the main strategy of the archive at the beginning, was moved to a different dimension with the focus strategy towards the intersection areas of the networks. Consequently KARMA started to provide a proper base for using macro perspectives on specific areas in the Black Sea cultural basin. Thus, while creating a structure that could be used with micro and macro perspectives²⁰ in Black Sea music studies step by step, the principle of focusing on the relationships which glorify change has been maintained without any interruption. In this context, the road to rethinking the Black Sea music through KARMA has been opened, and a fresh base has been prepared for different new approaches. Because, in the archive collections, there are various sources that can give us some opinions regarding the ethnomusicological past of the Black Sea through the melodies that were forgotten or not used in the same areas today. Also, some of these materials enable analyses concerning the cultural transformation processes of communities in the past of the respective regions. Even though there exist numerous special characteristic features region by region, the archive collections show us that there are also important similarities regarding instruments played, melodies, motifs, rhythm structures, and language features in the Black Sea cultural basin. In fact, it can be seen that the same melodies can be spread with the same and/or different names, sometimes with the same and/or different subjects and/or contents, in the related geographies.

For instance, a song from Adolf Dirr Caucasus 1909–1914 collection tells the story of “Hasan”. We can also find the same story with a similar melody in the Prussian Royal Phonographic Commission Prisoner of WWI Recordings 1915–1918 collection, where a Crimean Tatar prisoner sings it with almost identical lyrics. And finally, we find this song in the Turkish Radio Television (TRT) Archive collection and TRT Folk Songs Repertoire as “Drama Köprüsünü Gece mi Geçtin?” [You Crossed the Drama Bridge at Night?], and registered as a Rumelian²¹ folk song. The song is also sung all over Anatolia and people generally know this story with some variants. This song is just one example of how one can follow the traces of networks all-around the Black Sea through KARMA. In this context, KARMA gives us an opportunity to focus on the Black Sea music from both broad and narrow perspectives.

CURRENT PRACTICES

Walter Benjamin’s cultural-historical method, “takes waste, rubble, and ruins as its starting points for a multi-layered excavation of the slow emergence of modernity” as media theorist Jussi Parikka noted in his *Media Archaeology* (2012, 90). Therefore, audiovisual archives can be defined as highly valuable media storages and modern memory institutions that transfer these piles of “waste” that have accumulated

20 According to Akat, micro and macro perspectives should be considered one after the other first, and then together in Black Sea music studies. For detailed information, see Akat 2021.

21 It is the name given to the south of the Balkans since the 14th century in the Ottoman Empire.

over time since the early days of audiovisual recording. In fact, as the monuments of time, music archives serve as the implicit starting point of many historical studies. Despite their importance, they have been almost disregarded for a long time in many underdeveloped or developing countries, or they have generally been thrown into the background by institutions and even ethnomusicologists.

The work of KARMA was interrupted unprecedentedly in 2018. The process started with intense rumors about the division of the Karadeniz Technical University in the second half of 2016. After some time, the agreement with Midas Digital Archiving Software was canceled because of budget limitations in 2017. KARMA faced losing its digital data on the web and had to cut all online database works because it was not possible to buy a new archiving software. And finally, in May 2018, the Karadeniz Technical University was officially divided in two and the State Conservatory (so the archive as well) was linked to the newly established Trabzon University.

The first months of the new university were plagued by uncertainty. Since the conservatory and the central library had been located on different campuses in KTU, and they were linked with different universities after division, not only the belongings of the archive but also the working rooms, technical equipment, and even employees were split between the universities. And at the beginning of 2019, when the conservatory building was converted into the rectorate of the new university, the printed collections of the archive were left out due to space problems. In the summer of 2019, the collections were brought together at the Trabzon University after reconstructing an idle area.²² Thus, at least the collections of the KARMA survived, and the physical infrastructure of the archive was made useful again. However, the attempts were not enough to re-establish a valid digital archival system and transfer the archive's database. In the last quarter of 2019, Akat left his all positions in the archive and the conservatory and transferred to the Istanbul University, whereas Nural took over the responsibility for KARMA.²³ At that time, Akat also handed the future objectives of the archive to Nural. It became their priority to recover lost digital properties, provide the necessary employees adequately, sustain interrupted practices, support new fieldwork projects, prepare research projects, take part in new international collaborative activities, and develop professional relations had the priority. And these prioritised objectives began to be done within the constraints of the possibilities provided by the Trabzon University since the second half of 2020. First of all, we had to create a new and appropriate system to the standards of digital music archiving known around the world and reconsider the digitisation processes for different types of material. On the other hand, the need to develop techniques for storing and digital preservation of converted archival materials emerged.

22 It was done by the leadership of Hasan Karal (the Vice-Rector of the university) and Arda Nural. After long negotiations between Abdullah Akat (the Director of the State Conservatory at that time) and the head of the Central Library of KTU, some of the sound equipment, servers, computers, printers, and furniture such as tables, cabinets, and book and document shelves, remaining in KTU were moved back to the archive. With the help of some graduate students, the indoor spaces of the archive were organised and all the materials were put in appropriate places.

23 Akat has continued to work voluntarily for KARMA in collaboration with Nural until today.

Digital preservation is a set of agreed principles and outcomes. For this reason, the digital material to be protected must comply with the features of predictability, comprehensiveness, interoperability, interactivity, and sustainability. And these features constantly change the task structures of different institutions that make digital archiving and their relations with other institutions. Neil Beagrie lists these changes in the digital domain as such: changing patterns of distribution, changing time horizon for preservation, changes in intellectual property rights and archiving rights, globalisation, the information explosion, publications and records, the cultural record, and the role of the private collector (2003, 3–4).

American Library Association defines digital preservation in three ways: as short, medium, and long. The ‘long’ definition presents us with a combination of all processes:

Digital preservation combines policies, strategies and actions to ensure the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time, regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. Digital preservation applies to both born digital and reformatted content. Digital preservation policies document an organization’s commitment to preserve digital content for future use; specify file formats to be preserved and the level of preservation to be provided; and ensure compliance with standards and best practices for responsible stewardship of digital information. Digital preservation strategies and actions address content creation, integrity and maintenance (American Library Association 2007).

Considering all these views, it can be said that digital preservation actually refers to the organisational steps both before and after the digitisation process. For this reason, it is very important to develop archival standards and establish interoperable archive systems for the good operation of the digital preservation process. At this point, it will be necessary to apply open, closed, or mixed models according to the needs of the designed archive and to shape the working system of the archive. Today it is obvious that digital music archives need systematic steps such as planning and applying methods, quality management, and following up-to-date studies. However, music archives often experience various difficulties, especially economic and managerial problems whilst creating collections and technical infrastructure. On the other hand, the organisational process is not only limited to preservation, but also expands with situations such as the exhibiting and sharing of digital materials, which included ethical issues, copyright, etc., and has gained new dimensions that can create conflicts of rights.²⁴

While we were re-shaping the digital application steps and working procedures of KARMA, we benefited extensively from the guideline for digitisation procedures prepared by Ya-Ping Wang and Mei-Chih Chen (2010) within the context of the

24 IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives) has made significant contributions to this field with its regular symposiums and publications. Two of these are “IASA-TC 03”, which describes mostly the ethical and strategic aspects of digital preservation, and “IASA-TC 04”,

Taiwan e-Learning and Digital Archives Program and the Taiwan Digital Archives Expansion Project.

Accordingly, KARMA took as reference the model that Wang and Chen applied, which consists of four main steps, including preliminary procedures, digitisation procedures, data preservation and value-added applications (2010, 43). Later, we transformed this model into separate application forms for born-digital objects and non-born-digital objects in the audiovisual field (see Figure 2).

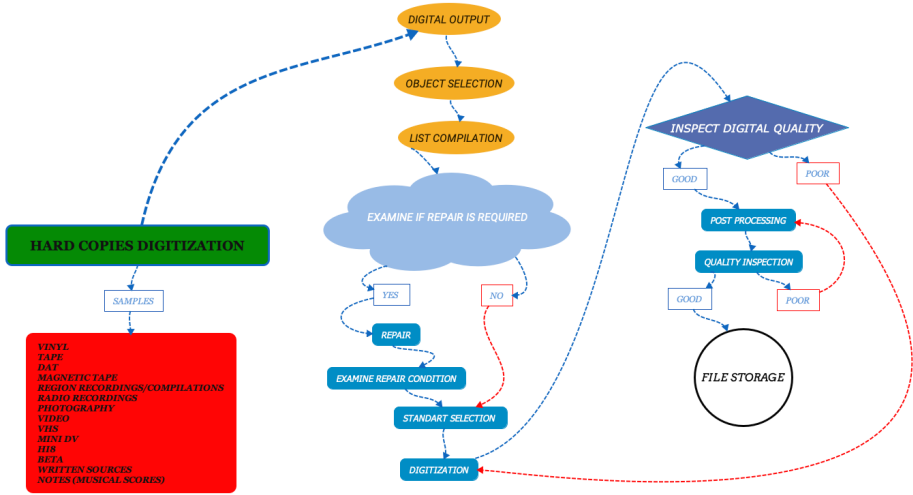


Figure 2. A Part of the Flow Chart for Object Digitization in KARMA.

On the other hand, working procedures prepared for KARMA needed to be supported with proper software immediately. However, we decided that it would be more appropriate to take an initiative and develop a specific metadata software directly for KARMA instead of buying an archive software that is compatible with the planned application steps and wasting time with its modifications. Accordingly, in the last quarter of 2020, the content developed by Nural over the metadata tree²⁵ prepared by Akat was presented to the newly created IT service of the Trabzon University and the process was started. Thus, KARMA metadata software was created by the Trabzon University Digital Transformation and Software Office in 2021 as a new software with all its components.

a practice handbook on the preservation of digital audio objects.

²⁵ The metadata tree was prepared based on the epistemological background of KARMA, upper and lower headings were created by referring to cataloging systems such as Dublin Core, Marc, and the Library of Congress.

KARMA metadata archive software has been prepared to serve in Turkish and English. Since it is a new software, the testing phase is carried out simultaneously with the data entry. To date, approximately 1500 data entries have been made and many detected errors have been corrected, while efforts to find solutions for the currently detected errors are continuing. Accessing different versions of an object through a catalog record, being able to go to the detailed information page through each data's own tag, providing the option to reduce the unnecessary data load in the system by detecting the same versions of a digital data, allowing data to be created or updated by more than one person simultaneously, and having an open ground for development are important advantages of the software.²⁶

KARMA metadata software aims not only to find a solution for recovering the lost digital properties of the archive but also to make an important contribution to the field of music archiving, after correcting its deficiencies. And we see it as a step that can contribute to participating in a federated search system for music archives or designing the architecture of such a system. Also, KARMA continues to work on its other objectives, including taking part in new international collaborative activities and developing professional relations.

We made efforts to hold the 7th Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe (SEE) in Trabzon in 2020, to introduce the archive and to promote KARMA as the basis for focusing on new perspectives in the Black Sea music. Although the process did not work as planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the symposium was held online in 2021, a sub-study group titled "Music and Dance in the Black Sea Cultural Basin" was established under the roof of the ICTM Study Group of SEE after this symposium. We expect the archival collections of KARMA to grow in parallel with the focused work of this sub-study group in the future.

CONCLUSION

In this article, the processes that KARMA has undergone since its establishment have been discussed from various perspectives. Although the physical conditions, technical equipment, employees, and digital infrastructure of the archive have experienced great changes, the epistemological background and the studies carried out in this framework and the created collections have always kept the archive alive and relevant. KARMA provides us with an opportunity to reveal the new links for the past

26 As the metadata software is planned to serve users both locally and via the internet in the future, Asp.net infrastructure is used and the database is prepared with MS SQL. Data security is created using raid 5 infrastructure. This infrastructure allows a new hard disk to be installed in the system without losing data, even if any of the hard disks in the system are corrupted. In addition, it creates different user authorisations on the software in order to prevent data leakage. The software has simple and advanced search options along with basic tabs on its web interface such as Home, Register, Login, About Us, Contact, Links, Appointment Form, Visiting, and Working Hours.

and present-day music of the Black Sea by bringing together audio-visual recordings, related documents, and every kind of old and new source that can tell us something of the music of this *circum mare* culture. Considering the size of the geography, it can be said that KARMA is still at the very beginning. The collections of KARMA give us some opinions regarding the period of their acquisition, and melodies that have been forgotten or not used in the same area today testify to the region's ethnomusicological past. Also, they enable analyses concerning the cultural transformation processes of communities in the past of the respective regions. To sum up, the archive is trying to fulfill an important mission today because the previous studies carried out in the Black Sea cultural basin and related audio-visual materials were rather scattered due to a variety of reasons: geopolitical, social, and economic.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Akat, Abdullah. 2010. *(B)ağsal Düşünce Çerçevesinde Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi Müziklerinin Değişim Süreci* [The Change Process of the East Black Sea Region Music as Part of (Net)tachmental Thought]. İstanbul: İstanbul Technical University, Institute of Social Sciences.
- Akat, Abdullah. 2012. "Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi ile Kırım Arasındaki Sosyal ve Kültürel Etkileşimler" [Social and Cultural Interactions Between Eastern Black Sea Region and Crimea]. In *Proceedings of the KTU 1st International Music Studies Symposium*, 14–24. Trabzon: Karadeniz Technical University State Conservatory.
- Akat, Abdullah. 2015. "An Overview of the Eastern Black Sea Region Local Culture Products in Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv". In *The Issues of Performance Folk and Church Music*, edited by Khatuna Managadze, 80–109. Batumi: Batumi Art State University.
- Akat, Abdullah. 2015. Music Archiving, unpublished lecture notes. Karadeniz Technical University.
- Akat, Abdullah. 2020. "Karadeniz Havzasında Müzik Çalışmaları ve Kültürel İşbirliği Potansiyeli" [Music Studies and the Potential of Cultural Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin]. In *Black Sea as a Space of Regional and International Cooperation*, edited by Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, 143–154. İstanbul: Yıldız Technical University Balkan and Black Sea Studies Center.
- Akat, Abdullah. 2021. "Re-Thinking Black Sea Music: Micro and Macro Perspectives". In *Music and dance in Southeastern Europe: place, space and resistance, Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium of the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Southeastern Europe*, edited by Liz Mellish, Nick Green and Belma Oğul, 229–235. Online: Trabzon University State Conservatory.
- ALA-American Library Association. 2007. Definitions of Digital Preservation, prepared by the Preservation and Reformatting Section, Working Group on Defining Digital Preservation, ALA Annual Conference, Washington, D.C. June 24, 2007. [accessed on 25.10.2022] <https://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/defdigpres0408>.
- Aydın, Mustafa. 2020. "Uluslararası Siyasette Bir Rekabet ve İşbirliği Sahası Olarak Karadeniz" [The Black Sea as a Field of Competition and Cooperation in International Politics]. In Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu (ed.) *Black Sea as a Space of Regional and International Cooperation*, 143–154. İstanbul: Yıldız Technical University Balkan and Black Sea Studies Center.
- Beagrie, Neil. 2003. *National Digital Preservation Initiatives: An Overview of Developments in Australia, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom and of Related International Activity*. Washington: Council on Library and Information Resources and Library of Congress.
- Braund David, Hall Edith, Wyles Rosie (eds). 2019. *Ancient Theatre and Performance Culture around the Black Sea*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gazimihal, Mahmut R. 1929. *Şarki Anadolu Türküleri ve Oyunları* [Eastern Anatolian Folk Songs and Dances]. İstanbul: Evkaf Matbaası.
- Latour, Bruno. 1999. "On Recalling ANT". In Hassard J., Law, J. (eds.) *Actor Network Theory*. The Sociological Review, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 15–25.
- Latour, Bruno. 2002. "Gabriel Tarde and the End of the Social". In *The Social in Question. New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, edited by Patrick Joyce, 117–132. London: Routledge.
- Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor – Network – Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parikka, Jussi. 2012. *What is Media Archeology?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Porter, Michel E. 1980. *Competitive Strategy: Techniques for Analyzing Industries and Competitors*. New York: The Free Press.
- Said, Edward W. 2004. *Kültür ve Emperyalizm* [Culture and Imperialism] Necmiye Alpay (trans.), İstanbul, Hil Yayın.

- Samson, Jim (2021) *Black Sea Sketches: Music, Place and People*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Saygun, Adnan. 1937. *Rize, Artvin ve Kars Havalisi Türkü, Saz ve Oyunları Hakkında Bazı Malumat* [Some information on the folk songs, instruments, and dances of Rize, Artvin, and Kars Regions]. Istanbul: Nümune Matbaası.
- Ya-Ping, Wang and Mei-Chih Chen. 2010. "Digitization Procedures Guideline: Integrated Operation Procedures", *Taiwan e-Learning and Digital Archives Program Taiwan Digital Archives Expansion Project*, Evergreen International Corporation.

АБДУЛА АКАТ И ОЗГУН АРДА НУРАЛ

УПРАВЉАЊЕ МУЗИЧКИМ АРХИВОМ КАРАДЕНИЗ (КАРМА):

ОСНОВЕ, ПОБОЉШАЊА И ТРЕНУТНЕ ПРИМЕНЕ

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Музички архив Карадениз (КАРМА) основан је у Трабзону, центру Источне црноморске регије Турске, 2011. године, с циљем да прикупи аудио-визуелни архивски материјал који је настао у тој регији. Ипак, иницијална тачка пројекта КАРМА били су прикупљање, чување и одржива трансмисија музике региона. Сврха ове мисије била је да се надомести празнина која је настала због непостојања звучних и аудио-визуелних архивских институција, а прве идеје о институционализацији архива КАРМА настале су примарно да би се побољшала свест званичних органа у Турској о аудио-визуелним архивима.

У овом чланку преиспитујемо како је КАРМА настојала да реши институционалне проблеме архивирања музике у Турској, као и како је допринела разумевању природе музичке културе Црног мора. Штавише, епистемолошка подлога за обликовање стратегија архива током година се бавила специфичним примерима у својој збирци. Након општег представљања пројекта КАРМА у првом делу, хронолошки смо описали фазе кроз које је архив прошао од оснивања до данас. У оквиру тога, прво смо се бавили ширењем архивске збирке путем мрежа, узроцима ове експанзије и првим периферним конекцијама које је архив успоставио. Затим смо нагласили значај сарадњи у развоју архивских збирки и објаснили које врсте заједничких активности су спроведене у домену едукације, технологије, истраживања и менаџмента између архива КАРМА и других локалних и међународних институција. На крају смо изложили проблеме с којима се архив сусретао због промена у конекцијама с универзитетом и потешкоће током овог транзиционог периода у погледу менаџмента. Представили смо и начине на које су ови проблеми превазиђени и тренутне праксе које архив спроводи.

Укратко, закључили смо да нам је КАРМА дала прилику да откријемо нове везе између прошлости и садашњости музике Црног мора. Истакли смо да архив настоји да ради у складу с овом важном мисијом, јер су постојеће студије базиране на културном басену Црног мора и аудио-визуелном материјалу који је био раштркан из различитих разлога: геополитичких, друштвених и економских.