The Karamanlidika Digital Library Project: Connecting Karamanlides Memories

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this paper is to outline how an international initiative to connect Karamanlides cultural heritage could be pursued by using digital library technologies. The Karamanlides, also known as the 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 first step of the research was to identify the available digital Karamanlides cultural artifacts via social media tools and pinpoint the useful metadata. The next step focused on the analysis of these user generated metadata derived from user uploaded images. Findings suggested that these unique cultural artifacts have been scattered all over the World Wide Web and lack descriptive metadata. Conceptual framework for the proposed digital library project will be discussed.

Keywords
Digital library, metadata harvesting, Karamanlidika cultural artifacts.

INTRODUCTION
The Karamanlides also known as the 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 1922-1923 and some other population migrations, there were areas of concentrated Greek population in various parts of Anatolia such as the Aegean coast, Cappadocia, 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 (Misailidis 1986, p. 134).

Karamanlidika or Karamanli Turkish represents unique characteristics in terms of its spoken and written discourse. The Karamanlidika alphabet often uses some special dots on some Greek characters as with the dotted pi and tau, as well as a iota. An example of these special characters is that the dotted pi corresponds to a “p” pronunciation of Arabic letter “bi” (Haralambous, 1999). The Karamanlidika alphabet, its script, and phonology were studied by Miller (1974) who proposed a new transliteration schema in his doctoral thesis. Table 1 presents the language discourses of Ottoman Turkish, Karamanlidika and Greek.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourses</th>
<th>Spoken</th>
<th>Written</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Turkish</td>
<td>Ottoman Turkish</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Ottoman Turkish</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>Greek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Discourses of Ottoman Turkish, Greek, and Karamanlidika (Karamanli Turkish)

In his seminal work, Kramsch (1998, p. 61) 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 (1998) also underlines that orality is acquired naturally in everyday life and literacy is learned in schools, which clearly addresses the complexity of Karamanlidika. Figure 1
displays the aforementioned characteristics of the Karamanlidika.

Figure 1. Micro focus on a Karamanlidika Map of the United States (Courtesy of Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc. (raremaps.com))

The term “Karamanlides cultural artifact” will be used to refer to any item including historical artifacts, manuscripts, photographs, maps, songs, and anything with cultural significance relating to this group’s history. This paper will investigate the following research questions: (1) What are the characteristics of the existing digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts, more specifically, do they offer sufficient data for information search and retrieval? (2) What are the possibilities of uniting these Karamanlides cultural artifacts which are scattered all over the World Wide Web into one unified virtual platform?

Although libraries, archives, and museums were the sole keeper of the cultural artifacts before the invention of the World Wide Web, the emergence of social media has radically enhanced the possibilities for the general public to disseminate their cultural heritage directly and therefore bypass these institutions.

Karamanlides cultural artifacts have been published by the public in social media tools such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook. Besides uploading, users can also tag these documents with their own keywords called “social tags.” Social tagging is incredibly valuable for these Karamanlides artifacts as they serve as the main tool for discoverability on the World Wide Web. The following section will identify some of these user provided Karamanlidika cultural artifacts which were found on the World Wide Web and examine their user generated tags.

**METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the data collection used to address the first research question: “What are the characteristics of the existing digital records representing Karamanlidika cultural artifacts, more specifically, do they offer sufficient data for information search and retrieval?”. 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 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 as is seen in table 2. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Karamanlidika</th>
<th>Karamanlides Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youtube</td>
<td>57 162 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>13 39 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>2 2 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Search queries and number of retrieved items from Social Media Tools

The next step focused on the purposive selection of a few artifacts and the analysis of their user generated format metadata. Seven digital artifacts were identified 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) the location 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 in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Tags</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Discussible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Rocks/Slide show</td>
<td>1784</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Inscribed Stone, entry of the building?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Greek/Cypriot</td>
<td>Inscribed Stone, entry of the house</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Chios, Cyprus</td>
<td>1850-1915</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Can and Gears</td>
<td>Photo/Pepple</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Karamanlis</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Karamanlidika</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Song</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Karamanlides Cultural Artifacts selected for analysis of Metadata Elements

Based on tags used to describe the artifacts, the most frequently used tag was Karamanlidika at 5 (71%) followed by Karamanlides at 3 (43%), Karamanlilar at 3 (43%), Karamanice at 1 (14%), and Karamanlı at 1 (14%). Figure 2 illustrates an entity-relationship diagram containing two
entity sets: Karamanlidika and Karamanlides and their attributes.

![Entity Relationship Diagram](image)

**Figure 2. Entity Relationship Diagram of the frequently used tags**

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The findings of this study indicate that the existing digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts offer somewhat sufficient data for information search and retrieval. Particularly, social tags assigned by users display descriptions of the 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, the 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, the YouTube oral interviews had English subtitles. Four out of 7 artifacts had information for the current location. Regarding the artifacts extracted from Facebook, very fruitful and informative discussions among the Facebook group members created valuable metadata. As is seen from Table 3, a general material description has been used to identify the type of documents; one image from the title page of a book dated 1784; two inscripted stones which seem to be prayers over the entries of houses; two photographs (one of them a family photo with the names and the relationships among them, and one of a famous orphanage/monastery in the 1911s). Two visual resources retrieved from YouTube also had sufficient tags for retrieval and the oral interview contained some genealogical data that could be used to create family trees.

Digital libraries serve in making digital items such as text, image, and, audiovisual resources available to users electronically (Borgman, 1999; Sarasevic, 2000; Fox and Marchionini, 2001). In this study, the Karamanlidika Digital Library will not only be a repository where Karamanlides artifacts are stored, described, and retrieved but also a collaborative working and meeting space (Renda and Straccia, 2005).

![Digital Library Prototype](image)

**Figure 3. Conceptual Framework of the Karamanlidika Digital Library**

The content component of the virtual library consists of three major elements, these are: digital objects, metadata, and annotations (Candela et al., 2008). 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. 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.

The major functions of the proposed system can be listed as: storing, registering, searching, and browsing (Candela et al., 2008). The theoretical framework for the Karamanlidika Digital Library’s system evaluation is formed as shown in figure 3. 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.

The end users of the proposed virtual library will be empowered to interact with the system in many different and complementary ways. A possible solution is found in crowdsourcing and in particular, encouraging many creative and knowledgeable people to tag collective memories. Moreover, 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. Furthermore, crowdsourcing can be a productive tool. 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 geneology is not just about connecting people genetically, it also reconstructs past relationships.
and connections. Most importantly it connects souls with their homeland. For such a project, it will be necessary to have some expert transcribers review and approve the work of the general public. The Karamanlidika Digital Library participants will have different roles such as transcriber, editor, arbitrator, etc.

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 the marketing of the system. For instance, the Karamanlidika 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.

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 settings of the events. Documents such as personal artifacts that remain in the hands of family members may not be able to be published elsewhere. These very valuable vital sources can help to trace the past of the Karamanlides. Moreover, census records, vital records, unpublished resources, and cemetery stones can document the names, life dates, and family relationships of the people.

CONCLUSION
This study examined 7 Karamanlides digital artifacts with the purpose of exploring the common metadata elements and proposes a prototype for the Karamanlidika Digital Library. The findings of this study show that existing digital records representing Karamanlides cultural artifacts are dispersed all over the World Wide Web; 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.

Moreover, this proposed platform will facilitate online cultural exchange and perhaps create new connections among geographically dispersed communities. It will facilitates 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.

The study in this article is preliminary and the proposed approach can be further improved in several ways: (1) recruiting a larger sample of metadata, and (2) testing this pilot prototype. The hope is that this proposed dynamic digital library space will support the future cultural exchange of Karamanlidika collective memory and assist in the development of a richer and fuller understanding of the Karamanlides people.

REFERENCES


