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**УНУТТА КАЛГАН ҮНДӨРДҮ САКТОО ЖАНА КАЙРА ЖАНДАНДЫРУУ:
ТҮРК ДҮЙНӨСҮНҮН ТАРЫХЫЙ АУДИОЖАЗМАЛАРЫ МЕНЕН ЕВРОПА АРХИВДЕРИНДЕ
ИШТӨӨ ЫКМАЛАРЫ**

**СОХРАНЕНИЕ И ВОЗРОЖДЕНИЕ ЗАБЫТЫХ ГОЛОСОВ:
ПОДХОДЫ К РАБОТЕ С ИСТОРИЧЕСКИМИ АУДИОЗАПИСЯМИ ТЮРКСКОГО МИРА
В ЕВРОПЕЙСКИХ АРХИВАХ**

**PRESERVING AND REVIVING FORGOTTEN VOICES:
APPROACHES TO WORKING WITH HISTORICAL AUDIO RECORDINGS
OF THE TURKIC WORLD IN EUROPEAN ARCHIVES**

Аннотация. Бул макалада түрк дүйнөсүнүн салттуу музыкасына байланыштуу тарыхый аудио жазмаларды сактоо, изилдөө жана аларды илимий жана маданий жүгүртүүгө кайрадан киргизүү маселелери каралат. XX кылымдын башында европалык изилдөөчүлөр тарабынан жазылып алынган бул фонографиялык материалдар зор маданий, тарыхый жана илимий баалуулукка ээ. Учурда алар Вена, Берлин, Париж, Будапешт жана Санкт-Петербург сыяктуу алдыңкы европалык фонограмма архивдеринде сакталууда, бирок көпчүлүгү илимий жактан жетиштүү деңгээлде изилденген эмес жана алар тиешелүү коомчулуктарга жеткиликтүү эмес. Айрыкча маанилүү болуп саналган материалдар — бул 1902–1944-жылдар аралыгында жазылган талаа жана согуш туткундарынын лагерлериндеги жазуулар, алар түрк тилдүү элдердин тарыхый татаал жана этикалык жактан сезимтал шарттардагы үн материалдарын камтыйт. ICTMD–TURKSOY демилгеси менен ишке ашырылып жаткан Түрк дүйнөсүнүн фонограмма архиви долбоорунун алкагында жүргүзүлгөн акыркы изилдөөлөрдүн негизинде, бул макалада көп тилдүү архивдик маалыматтарды салыштыруу, аткаруучуларды аныктоо жана метамаалыматтарды талдоо методологиясы баяндалат. Ошондой эле материалдарды санариптештирүү, илимий интерпретациялоо жана заманбап академиялык жана маданий чөйрөгө интеграциялоо боюнча азыркы аракеттер талкууланат. Бул иш түрк дүйнөсүнүн маданий эстелигин сактоого, тарыхый адилеттүүлүктү калыбына келтирүүгө жана маданий жадды жандандырууга салым кошот.

Негизги сөздөр: Түрк дүйнөсүнүн салттуу музыкасы; музыкалык мурасты сактоо; тарыхый аудиожазуулар; Европалык фонограмма архивдери; согуш туткундарынын жазмалары; этномузыкалуу изилдөөлөр

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются вопросы сохранения, изучения и возвращения в научный и культурный оборот ранних исторических аудиозаписей, документирующих традиционную музыку Тюркского мира, значительная часть которых до сих пор остаётся фрагментарной и малоизученной. Эти фонографические материалы, записанные европейскими исследователями в начале XX века, представляют собой уникальную культурную, историческую и научную ценность. В настоящее время они хранятся в ведущих звуковых архивах Европы — в Вене, Берлине, Париже, Будапеште и Санкт-Петербурге, — однако остаются недостаточно исследованными и труднодоступными для сообществ, которым они принадлежат. Особую научную значимость представляют полевые и лагерные записи, сделанные в 1902–1944 годах, зафиксировавшие голоса тюркоязычных исполнителей в исторически сложных и этически чувствительных условиях. Основываясь на новейших исследованиях, проведённых в рамках инициативы ICTMD–TURKSOY Фонограмм Архив Тюркского мира, статья описывает методологию сопоставления многоязычных архивных

данных, идентификации исполнителей и анализа сопроводительных метаданных. Также обсуждаются современные усилия по оцифровке, научной интерпретации и интеграции этих материалов в актуальный академический и культурный дискурс. В конечном итоге работа вносит вклад в сохранение культурного наследия, восстановление исторической справедливости и возрождение культурной памяти Тюркского мира.

Ключевые слова: традиционная музыка Тюркского Мира; сохранение музыкального наследия; исторические аудиозаписи; Европейские фонограмм архивы; записи военнопленных; этномузыкология

Abstract. This article examines the preservation, study and reintegration of early historical audio recordings of traditional music from the Turkic world. Many of these recordings remain fragmented and underexplored. Recorded by European researchers in the early twentieth century, these phonographic materials represent invaluable cultural, historical and scholarly resources. Today, they are housed in major sound archives, including those in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Budapest and St. Petersburg. However, most remain insufficiently studied and inaccessible to the communities they represent. Of particular significance are the unique field and prisoner-of-war recordings made between 1902 and 1944 which document the voices of Turkic-speaking individuals in historically complex and ethically sensitive conditions. Drawing on recent research conducted within the ICTMD–TURKSOY initiative, ‘The Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World’, this article outlines the methodology of cross-referencing multilingual archival data to identify performers and analyse accompanying metadata. It also discusses current efforts to digitise these materials, interpret them from a scholarly perspective, and integrate them into contemporary academic and cultural discourse. Ultimately, this work contributes to heritage preservation, historical justice, and the re-establishment of cultural memory for the Turkic world.

Keywords: Traditional music of the Turkic world, preservation of musical heritage, historical audio recordings, European phonogram archives, prisoner-of-war recordings, ethnomusicology.

Introduction

The safeguarding, conservation, and revitalization of cultural heritage represent a global challenge of profound scientific, historical, cultural, and societal importance. The continuity and development of musical culture, particularly, depend on the effectiveness and sustainability of these initiatives. The traditional musical culture of the Turkic World—an extensive Eurasian region spanning from the Caucasus and the Urals to Central Asia and Siberia—embodies a unique musical civilization characterized by rich folklore traditions and sophisticated oral musical arts.

Within the Turkic World, there exists a substantial repository of historical audio recordings that document the musical traditions of Turkic-speaking peoples, collected by researchers from numerous countries. These recordings, which date from 1900 to the present, were gathered through stationary and field folklore expeditions across Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. Many of these recordings are preserved in institutional archives—research institutes, libraries,

museums, and radio archives, as well as private collections within Turkic countries. However, a significant portion of these early twentieth-century recordings, which hold immense cultural and academic value, are housed in foreign archives in Vienna, Berlin, Paris, Budapest, St. Petersburg, and Moscow, where they remain largely unexamined. Recent geopolitical conflicts and global instability have posed tangible threats to the preservation of the Turkic musical heritage. Consequently, many audiovisual archives in the Turkic World house extensive collections that remain inaccessible to scholars and, by extension, largely unknown to the global community.

The establishment of the International Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World is a significant milestone in improving the accessibility of these audiovisual collections. Initiated by TURKSOY’s former Secretary General and ICTMD Ambassador, Prof. Dusen Kasseinov, and directed by Asst. Prof. Dr. Fatima Nurlybayeva, the project is dedicated to protecting and preserving the musical heritage of the Turkic peoples. A key objective is to establish a Unified Audiovisual Fund for Traditional Music of the Turkic Countries. Since

its launch in 2020, the project has received backing from the International Council for Traditional Music and Dance (ICTMD) and TURKSOY, as well as forming formal partnerships with the Ministries of Culture of several Turkic nations.

The Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World: Initiative and Objectives

The archive includes a broad range of traditional genres from Azerbaijan, Bashkortostan, Gagauzia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These encompass both well-known and rare audio collections, with notable releases such as "Voices of Siberia" (2020) and "Epic Soundscapes: Northern Turkestan" (2021), produced from materials held by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The initiative also addresses the fragmented state of audio archives within post-Soviet Turkic countries, where centralization during the Soviet era led to the concentration of original collections in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Today, many national repositories remain underdeveloped, lacking integrated catalog systems, digital infrastructure, and international visibility. Numerous field recordings exist in isolation, with limited online presence and minimal access for international researchers. Exceptions such as Azerbaijan demonstrate the benefits of state-supported archival preservation, with significant collections maintained at the National Museum of Musical Culture and affiliated institutions. However, in much of the Turkic world, historic recordings are either inaccessible or endangered due to technical deterioration.

"The Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World": Preserving and Studying Traditional Musical Heritage

Since 2020, substantial work has been undertaken within the framework of the joint scientific project of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM) and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TÜRKSOY), titled "The Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World." This project has secured cooperation and received confirmation from the Ministries of Culture of several Turkic-speaking countries. The resulting Unified Archive of Audio and Video Recordings of Traditional Music of the Turkic World now includes an extensive collection encompassing nearly all traditional genres and forms from regions including Azerbaijan, Bashkortostan, Gagauzia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan,

Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. The archive comprises both renowned audio collections of traditional music from Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, as well as rare recordings from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Gagauzia.

As part of the project, efforts are ongoing to consolidate Turkic collections from European archives into this unified repository. For instance, the first CDs with historical audio recordings from the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences have been published, including "Voices of Siberia" (2020) and "Epic Soundscapes: Northern Turkestan" (2021).

As part of this initiative, efforts are focused on consolidating Turkic collections from European archives into a unified repository. The release of historical audio recordings from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences marks a milestone in this collaborative endeavour. This article presents an overview of recent archival discoveries, focusing on the historical sound collections of Turkic music from the Berlin and Vienna Phonogram Archives. These collections, compiled in prisoner-of-war camps during World War II, will be analysed for their research significance, publication potential, and integration into the scientific discourse. The materials were prepared by the author between 2022 and 2024 as part of a joint research project by ICTMD, TURKSOY, and the Vienna Phonogram Archive.

The Phonogram collections in the archives of former Soviet states from 1917 to 1992 formed the foundation of sound recording repositories across the republics; however, due to centralized archiving policies, primary collections were both recorded and predominantly preserved within centralized archives in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In examining the current state of ethnomusicological archives within the Turkic regions of the former USSR, several key observations emerge:

- Audio archives remain fragmented and lack integration into a unified national repository.
- A substantial number of field recordings are preserved independently across institutions, including the archives of various Academies of Sciences and the folklore collections of national conservatories and universities. Despite the extensive collections documenting the traditional music of Turkic peoples, many ethnomusicological archives lack online catalogues and dedicat-

ed websites, rendering them largely inaccessible to the international academic community. Many audio recordings from these archives have been lost due to various factors, and many of those that remain are in urgent need of technical restoration. A notable exception is Azerbaijan's music archives, which benefit from sustained state support. A substantial number of recordings are well-maintained in the National Museum of Musical Culture and the archives of the National Conservatory and Music Academy.

Consequently, a vast quantity of sound and audiovisual materials documenting the musical heritage of Turkic-speaking peoples exists in archives around the world. However, access to these collections is limited, and they are scarcely known internationally. This paper aims to raise awareness of these repositories and emphasise the importance of facilitating broader access for scientific research and preservation efforts.

The Berlin Phonogram Archive

The Berlin Phonogram Archive was established in 1900 at the initiative of psychologist Carl Stumpf. Initially part of Berlin University's Psychological Institute, it was directed by Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and grew into one of the premier sound archives of its time. In 1934, it was transferred to the Museum of Ethnology. During World War II, the archive's collections were divided, with part of them relocated to Leningrad; this section was later returned to East Berlin in the late 1950s and became part of the Academy of Sciences. In 1991, these collections were reassembled within the Ethnological Museum, where they now form part of the Department of Ethnomusicology. The Berlin Phonogram Archive holds over 150,000 recordings, primarily traditional music from more than 230 cultures worldwide, including over 30,000 wax cylinders. The archive's historical collections also include approximately 2,000 shellac records [1,2]. The Berlin Phonogram Archive was added to UNESCO's "Memory of the World" register in 1999 [3]. Since December 2020, the collections of the Berlin Phonogram Archive and the Humboldt University's Sound Archive have been combined into a unified repository. From its early years, researchers at the Berlin and Vienna Phonogram Archives conducted systematic "classical" phonographic studies, embarking on field expeditions across Europe, Africa, Asia, America, and Australia to document and record the folklore of

various peoples. For instance, Adolf Dirr studied the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (1903–1909) [4,5]; Richard Karutz conducted research trips to Central Asia and Kazakhstan in 1905–1907 [6,7]; Felix von Luschan visited Turkey and Syria (1902), while Albert von Le Coq explored Turkistan (1904) [8]. Other notable research included Erich Moritz von Hornbostel's work in North America (1906) and Theodor Koch-Grünberg's expeditions in Brazil (1912). The Berlin Phonogram Archive's Turkic collections are invaluable, representing some of the earliest documented audio materials and rare audio records documenting the cultural and musical heritage of Turkic-speaking communities. Alongside later recordings from the second half of the 20th century and early 21st century, the archive's Turkic collections include historical recordings dating from the early 1900s through the 1920s. These recordings can be categorized as follows:

1. *Ethnographic Recordings of Turkic-Speaking Peoples.* The first category consists of recordings from expeditions and fieldwork conducted by ethnographers in the early 20th century across hard-to-access regions for European researchers, including Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Eastern Turkestan, the Caucasus, and Transcaucasia. Beginning in the early 1900s, experts from the Vienna and Berlin Phonogram Archives conducted intensive ethnographic research in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Caucasus, and the Caspian region. They documented traditional musical folklore, published books and articles on their findings, and delivered lectures on the languages, culture, and traditional music of these regions. Prominent figures in these efforts included *Richard Karutz, Adolf Dirr, Albert von Le Coq*, and others.

2. *Recordings of Turkic-Speaking Prisoners of War during World War I (1915–1918).* A significant part of the Berlin Phonogram Archive consists of recordings of folk songs by prisoners of war, recorded by the Prussian Royal Phonographic Commission. Led by Professor Carl Stumpf and initiated by W. Doegen, the future founder of the Berlin Sound Archive, this project captured an "unprecedented array" of linguistic and musical samples from "nearly all peoples of European and Asiatic Russia" [9,10]. Over 2.5 million soldiers were held in German camps, and a further 1.3 million in camps across the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Commission

for Musical Recordings was led by Stumpf, with Hornbostel participating briefly in 1905 before his role was taken over by his assistant Georg Schünemann, who recorded more than 1,000 samples across 25 prisoner camps [11].

While Stumpf's Phonographic Commission used Edison's phonograph for musical recordings, Orientalists and linguists used the gramophone, contracting with the Odeon record label, which oversaw production and distribution. The first prisoner-of-war recordings took place in Debitz, near Berlin, on December 29, 1915 [12]. From late 1915 through late 1918, the Commission conducted research in 31 German prisoner camps [13]. This project yielded 1,651 gramophone recordings (vocal and instrumental) and 1,022 wax cylinder recordings [13,14,15]. These recordings of prisoners of war remain preserved within the Berlin Phonogram Archive and are part of an extensive scientific initiative by the Anthropological Society, funded by Prussia's Ministry of Science, Art, and Education [16,17]. Researchers identified three primary ethnic categories of Russian prisoners of particular scientific interest for this project: 1. Finno-Ugric groups, including the Komi, Udmurts, Mari, Chuvash, and Mordvins; 2. Turkic-speaking groups, including Bashkirs, Volga Tatars, and Crimean Tatars; and 3. Caucasian groups [10].

Among more than 200 distinct ethnic groups documented in the German prison camps, the language and music of the Turkic-speaking peoples constitute a significant aspect of research. Folk songs and instrumental samples from Turkic-speaking nations were recorded on wax discs, each accompanied by a corresponding protocol [17].

Historical audio materials compiled by the Prussian Commission between 1915 and 1918 feature the song and instrumental folklore of the following peoples: *Bashkirs, Kumyks, Tatars, Crimean Tatars*, and *Chuvashes*. The recordings made in the prisoner-of-war camps preserved detailed accounts of the recording procedures, as well as ethnomusicological observations and hypotheses by G. Schünemann, who recorded over 1,000 pieces across 25 camps [18, 19]. In 1919, based on these recordings, a compilation titled *Kazansky Tatars* was published, featuring musical notation and texts of 19 Volga Tatar songs [19].

As part of the international project "*The Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World*" (2022-2023), jointly conducted by the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTMD) and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY), a comprehensive analysis of archival materials from European and Russian repositories enabled the identification and reconstruction of the names of Tatar prisoners of war depicted in a well-known photograph from the Berlin Phonogram Archive. The image shows Carl Stumpf (right) and Georg Schünemann (center) during a recording session with Tatar musicians in a prisoner-of-war camp in Frankfurt an der Oder in 1915. The musicians have been identified as *Mukharam Iskakov, Batrakhan Khakimov* (violin), and *Rakhiman Khurmatulin* (left). Archival evidence indicates that all three individuals originated from the Volga region, specifically from the Ufa and Kazan provinces [20,21].



Pic.1

C. Stumpf (rechts) und G. Schünemann (Mitte) bei der Aufnahme tatarischer Musiker in Frankfurt/Oder, 1915

During the archival research, we uncovered unique historical audio recordings from the World War I prisoner-of-war camps, previously thought to be lost and uncirculated in scholarly contexts, held in the collections of the Berlin Laut Archive. The 1915-1918 gramophone recordings from camps in *Niederzwehren, Göttingen, Frankfurt an der Oder, Puchheim, Merseburg*, and others include traditional music samples from *Azerbaijan, Bashkirs, Kazakhs, Crimean Tatars, Kumyks, Tatars, Chuvashes*, and other ethnic groups.

The folk song and instrumental traditions of the Turkic-speaking peoples were recorded on wax discs, each accompanied by a protocol [22], and in some cases, with musical notation and song texts. These protocols carefully document the names of informants/performers, albeit in slightly altered German transcription. Thanks to this data, as well as historical materials from several international archives, we have been able to reconstruct the exact identities of the Turkic-speaking prisoners-of-war whose voices were captured on wax discs. These include: *Sagissultan Waliachmetov, Chakimulla Galliulin, Muttiola Karamanow, Motagar Asphonderof, Jegor Prokopief, Musharam Isakov, Rashiman Churmatulin, Batrashan Chakimoff, Miraltin Siestinow, Mochtarulla Ibadullin, Abdrahman Fejasoff, Islamril Chamsin*, among others [20, 22].

In addition to the audio materials representing folk traditions from various ethnic groups, we discovered unique historical photographs taken by photographer O. Stihl in the prisoner-of-war camps between 1915 and 1918. These photographs, previously considered lost and not widely circulated, provide the names, nationalities, and places of birth of the prisoners. This photographic evidence, combined with data from foreign archives, has allowed us to identify the Turkic-speaking prisoners featured in these historical images. Among those identified are *Seydulla Sibagatulin, Khaierdin Mukhamediyev, Mufigula Karinov, Khaierdin Abdurahmanov, Ramazan Bayramgali*, and others [20,21].

Vienna Phonogram Archive

The Vienna Phonogram Archive is the oldest sound archive in the world. It was established on 27 April 1899 by members of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. Its first director was Professor of Physiology at the University of Vienna, Sigmund Exner [23,24]. The archive collects,

studies, stores and catalogues audio materials reflecting the language, oral folk traditions and musical heritage of European and non-European peoples. Researchers at the Vienna Phonogram Archive have undertaken extensive “classical” phonographic research, conducting expeditions across Europe, Africa, Asia, America and Australia to collect and document various folklore traditions [25,26].

Historical Collections

The Vienna Phonogram Archive is home to over 64,000 recordings, covering 9,600 hours. These invaluable historical audio materials are part of UNESCO’s “Memory of the World” program. Since 1999, the archive has been publishing “Historical Collections” (1899–1950) on CDs with commentary, releasing 19 series covering three-quarters of its holdings [27]. The Turkic-language collections are of particular significance, containing the earliest recorded audio documents chronicling the musical and cultural history of Turkic-speaking communities. These collections include recordings from the early 1900s to the 1920s, as well as later recordings from the 20th and 21st centuries. The archival heritage of Turkic-speaking peoples in the historical collections of the Vienna Phonogramm Archive can be divided into three key groups.

The first group comprises early ethnographic field recordings made in the early 20th century during expeditions to regions that were largely inaccessible to European scholars at the time, including Central Asia, Kazakhstan, East Turkestan, the Caucasus and Anatolia. Researchers affiliated with the Berlin and Vienna phonogram archives, including Adolf Dirr, Felix von Luschan, and Albert von Le Coq, conducted fieldwork in these regions. They recorded traditional music and published linguistic and cultural studies, making significant contributions to the field of early ethnomusicology [28].

The second group consists of recordings made in Austro-Hungarian prisoner-of-war camps during World War I (1915–1918), which later became part of the historical series published by the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv in 1999 as “Complete Historical Collections 1899–1950” [29]. Of particular value are over 200 wax cylinder recordings of Turkic-speaking prisoners of war from the Russian Empire, captured by the anthropologist Rudolf Pöch and the musicologist Robert Lach. Fieldwork took place in camps lo-

cated in Eger (Cheb), Reichenberg (Liberec), and Theresienstadt (Terezín), using phonographic equipment supplied by the Vienna archive. These recordings, accompanied by field notes, include vocal and instrumental performances, religious recitations, and linguistic samples. They formed part of a broader research initiative funded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Anthropological Society, which classified prisoners into three main ethnolinguistic groups: Finno-Ugric, Turkic, and Caucasian peoples [30,31].

Of the over 215 documented ethnic groups, the Turkic recordings — featuring the *Bashkirs*, *Kumyk*, *Crimean* and *Kazan Tatars*, *Nogai*, *Mishar*, and *Chuvashes* — are particularly notable. The accompanying metadata often includes details such as the informant's age, religion, region of origin and repertoire. These materials were later deciphered and catalogued by leading European scholars: *Herbert Jansky* (University of Vienna) worked on the *Tatar* recordings, Dr. *Galimjan Tagan* and *Herbert Jansky* collaborated on the *Bashkir* recordings, and *Eden Beck* (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) worked on the *Mari* recordings. Further ethnolinguistic collections relating to the Abkhazians, Ossetians, Georgians, Svans, and others were processed similarly between 1917 and 1940. Descriptive reports by Pöch and musicological commentary by Lach provide essential interpretive context [32,33].

In the course of scientific research, we discovered unique historical film documents in another Vienna archive. Made by R. Pöch in prisoner-of-war camps in 1915-1918, these were previously considered lost. Film materials from several series of ethnographic documentaries represent a comprehensive historical source on Turkic-speaking prisoners-of-war [34].

The third group of historical recordings of Turkic-speaking peoples, stored in the funds of the Vienna Phonogrammarchiv, represents audio recordings of prisoners of war of the Second World War, which were made in prisoner-of-war camps in Austria and the Czech Republic in 1943-1944.

The Austrian Academy of Sciences (1938-1945) and Its Involvement in the Ahnenerbe Program

A significant proportion of the research projects carried out by the Austrian Academy between 1938 and 1945 supported Nazi ideology and received the NSDAP's full backing. These

projects were conducted within the framework of the infamous *Nazi programme 'Ahnenerbe'*, or 'Ancestral Heritage', which was directed by *Reichsführer SS H. Himmler*. This is confirmed by recently published archival materials, such as the study by A. Gingrich, director of the Institute of Ethnology at the University of Vienna [35]. In Nazi-occupied Austria, the Ahnenerbe's ethnological initiatives were managed by Viktor Christian, a professor at the Academy and a long-standing NSDAP member. His work established the "Educational and Research Center for the Middle East" (LFVO) at the University of Vienna, which focused on various ethnological subdisciplines. Although many documents were destroyed, records show the LFVO's research activities under the Ahnenerbe framework. A significant project directed by V. Christian was the "Recordings of Prisoners of War 1943-1944" (Aufnahmen II, Archiv 1943-44), which documented the folklore of ethnic groups detained in Austrian and Czech POW camps. Researchers such as I. Knobloch and S. Wurm captured the music and oral traditions of various Turkic-speaking communities and other ethnic minorities, aligned with NSDAP objectives that saw these groups as potential allies [36].

Recordings were made in POW camps near Vienna, including *Kaisersteinbruch* and *Gneixendorf*, and possibly at the Vienna Phonogram Archive. The historical audio materials recorded by S. Wurm and I. Knobloch in prisoner-of-war camps between 1943 and 1944 form part of the "Recordings 1943-1944" project and represent significant scientific material. The total audio duration is 8 hours and 40 minutes, covering 19 languages and 23 dialects, including those of thirteen Turkic-speaking peoples: *Azerbaijanis*, *Bashkirs*, *Kazakhs*, *Karachais*, *Karakalpaks*, *Kumyks*, *Crimean Tatars*, *Kyrgyz*, *Nogais*, *Tatars*, *Uyghurs*, *Uzbeks*, *Turks*, *Turkmen*, and *Chuvashes* [37].

Post-war, despite damage to technical equipment, wax discs and matrices, all historical records were carefully rewritten, described and catalogued in the Vienna Phonogram Archive after technical restoration. Audio recordings of Turkic peoples were made from informants in various regions and dialects. For example, recordings of Kyrgyz from Jalalabad, Uzbeks from Fergana, Namangan, Andijan and Bukhara; Azerbaijanis from Shusha; Kazakhs from Shymkent,

Turkestan, Sary-Agash and Zharkent; Uighurs from Chilik and Zharkent; Turkmens from Ashgabat; Kumyks from Bosh-Yurt; Tatars from Penza; and Bashkirs from Baymak [38]. Songs and folklore were recorded on discs, with each audio recording accompanied by a protocol. The Austrian Commission also recorded the names and surnames of the informant-performers (although somewhat distorted in German transcription). Thanks to this information and other foreign archives, we were able to restore the exact data of the Turkic-speaking performers - prisoners of war, whose voices were recorded on a gramophone. After the war, scientists like Wurm and Knobloch omitted references to their wartime affiliations with the NSDAP in their publications. Archival evidence from Vienna, Leipzig, and Berlin confirms their involvement in Ahnenerbe-affiliated projects until 1945. These recordings are invaluable to ethnomusicology, ethnography and linguistics, providing unique historical documentation of Turkic-speaking peoples' cultural heritage. They are now part of UNESCO's Memory of the World programme and represent a rare resource in the sound archives of Turkic-speaking regions. Integrating these archives into contemporary scholarship requires extensive digitisation and documentation, with publication expected between 2024 and 2027. This preliminary catalog offers scholars an initial view into these collections, which will be fully accessible upon completion.

While conducting research for the project, we came across some unique historical photographs of prisoners of war from 1943–44. These photographs were considered lost and were not circulated in scientific circles. Among the photographs are images of Turkic-speaking prisoners, including *Mannaf Israilov* and *Yahya Dadahanov* from Central Asia. Thanks to this information, along with data from foreign archives, we were able to identify the prisoners [39,40]. We hope that, by publishing all the information, we will be able to restore the names of all the Turkic-speaking prisoners of war recorded in this project.

Problems of Access, Metadata, and Identification

The condition and accessibility of these collections vary widely. Many recordings remain only partially catalogued, with limited metadata or language identifiers. For example, in the Berlin archive, numerous recordings are grouped

under vague labels such as "Tatarisch" or "Turkestanisch," despite the linguistic and ethnic diversity of performers — including Kazakh, Bashkir, Tatar, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Azerbaijani individuals. Wax cylinders often include handwritten field notes in German, many of which require reanalysis and verification. Moreover, outdated catalog systems and non-digitized inventories hinder broader accessibility. Translation of descriptive data into Turkic and English languages remains a critical step.

Ethical and Methodological Challenges

Much of this material was recorded without informed consent, especially in POW contexts or during colonial expeditions. Ethical challenges include the use of these recordings in academic and public settings without involvement of descendant communities. Furthermore, performance context is often absent from the archival notes, making it difficult to understand whether a lament was performed spontaneously, on request, or under duress. The potential for misrepresentation is high without adequate cultural and historical framing. Researchers must adopt a decolonial and dialogical approach, involving community consultation, especially when republishing or exhibiting these materials.

The ICTMD-TURKSOY Initiative: Digitization and Reconnection

In response to these challenges, the "Phonogram Archive of the Turkic World" project, jointly initiated by ICTMD and TÜRKSÖY, aims to locate, digitize, analyze, and share previously unknown recordings and related documents of the Turkic musical tradition. The project has identified over 1,000 relevant phonograms across several European collections. A multilingual team of researchers from Kazakhstan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and other countries is working to provide accurate translations, ethnomusicological commentary, and community-based interpretation. This initiative marks a significant step toward cultural restitution and aims to present these materials through online archives, public concerts, and scholarly publications.

Conclusions and Future Directions

Preserving and reviving the Musical Memory of the Turkic world requires not only technical access to historical materials but also conceptual and ethical frameworks for working with them. By combining archival research with community engagement and international cooperation, it is

possible to transform forgotten recordings into living heritage. Further efforts should focus on digitization, multilingual cataloging, ethical licensing, and creating platforms for descendant

communities to access and reinterpret their heritage. The study of early sound recordings can thereby contribute not only to scholarship but also to intercultural dialogue, identity affirmation, and cultural sustainability.

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