ROUND TABLE

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Archives matter – an introduction

The theme of the round-table "traditional concepts of sound archiving and today's challenges" was thought to start a discussion on an important problem which has been of interest for quite a long time. Rethinking this scenario inevitably evokes thoughts about archives as institutions or archives in general, their history but also their shifts and changes, position, structure and organization. Debates on sound archives and their transformation caused by technical progress and considerations about the position and ideas of archives in social and cultural respect are in the middle of our interests as well as the question why archives had been invented and founded and for whom.

Specialists from different countries have been invited to present their thoughts as input for the forthcoming discussion. Thus, this chapter includes an introduction and four differing contributions concerning selected views.

The introduction treats of the question "for what purpose sound archives have been established".

A short look on the world's first sound archive, the Phonogrammarchive of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, could give some answers: The idea of the founder, Sigmund Exner, was to use the boosting invention of sound recording for scientific purposes and to preserve those early sound recordings, comprising speaking or music making, for future research. Thus, he was speaking about the systematic production, collection, and preservation of wax rolls, leading to "the construction of a kind of phonographic archive" (see Exner 1900:1). Moreover, technical innovation changed the research interests. It was then possible to record acoustically what before only could be described from a personal point of view. Thus, archivists address sound recordings as primary sources vis-à-vis explanations or verbal descriptions. On the one hand sound recordings are fixed moments or fragments of reality, on the other hand there does not exist any other kind of document giving an idea of a past acoustic liveliness (see Exner 1900:3).

The primary objective of the archivists has been to preserve the carriers in the best possible condition by meticulously handling cylinders, discs, or magnetic tapes. It was

essential to rely on the most well-preserved carrier to save and subsequently replay the content. Re-recording historical careers was and is extremely important. The goal is to use equipment and techniques to receive not only the best but also the most correct result. In this respect the Phonogrammarchive has established special expertise being an active and supportive partner for many sound archives worldwide. Over times technical findings have changed. The magnetic tape turned out not to be stable for long-time purposes, as well as the DAT tapes. Therefore, the philosophy of archiving has undergone a turnaround, prioritizing the preservation of content over the carrier. This shift became possible due to technological developments and reached its preliminary terminal point with the digitization. Content management and resulting databases paved the way for open access. This turn facilitated the starting point for a widespread use of sound recordings and changed the situation of archives.

Audiovisual archives and their development were and are shaped by methodological changes and technical progress. The sound preservation and corresponding written documentation was a prerequisite for the Phonogrammarchive and similar archives from the very beginning. "Keeping" the sound, i.e. making copies of the original sound, was a challenge in the early years. Meanwhile, caused by digital tools original recordings and copies become blurred. Nevertheless, creating "copies" stands for the idea to guarantee "safety" of the items.

Besides the technological advancements which shaped the changes of archival practices everywhere, disputes occurred by the annotation and content-related documentation of sound recordings. Initially, the Phonogrammarchive developed a form that was later adopted by other archives, providing a structured set of information regarding the performer, recording location, time, and technical details. However, the section concerning the content became a subject of ongoing discussions over the years. Users sometimes expressed doubts about the descriptions and findings by the researchers or the archivists. Furthermore, widespread discussions started about the position of archives or memory institutions, and their control over collections and contents. These discussions have also focused on changes in approaches concerning historical reinterpretation, political and socio-cultural transformation as well as the relationship between performer, researcher and archivist as stimulated by Shuba Chaudhuri and Anthony Seeger (2004).

Archives developed in different directions which raised various questions. E.g., to what extent are archives homogeneous in their contents or archiving practice? This depends, for instance, on the focus of an archive: songs' archives (maybe even a special kind of songs) probably are more homogeneous than sound archives comprising any acoustic feature, such as noises, animal voices, various languages or vocal and instrumental music. Linked to this observation, any archive has its own construction, depending on the character and emphasis of the institution, e.g. national audiovisual archives, university or research archives, thematic specialized archives, regional, city or local archives, private

archives, etc. (see Edmundson 2004:31-33).

As another mismatch it turned out, that for quite a long time only specialists, designated officials and similar individuals got permission to enter archives. This created an unfair disadvantage for people having acted as performers and residing in remote regions, far from the archives. Seeger and Chaudhuri highlighted this situation as a central theme stressing that archives should ensure that descendants of those recorded have an equal opportunity to access and listen to the recordings.

Moreover, it has become evident that archivists practice profound power and responsibility. They define the places and structures in which the "acoustic memory" is kept, they decide what must be saved or discarded (cf. Edmondson 2004:66). In other words: Archives are places to preserve information for the future, they are custodians and content creators, and they decide what should be kept and what deleted. Archives bear responsibility, a central topic archives are aware of and which is deeply discussed.

We must assert that archives are invented by people, organized by people, and discussed in retrospect. A lot has been done, and some mistakes have occurred. It is specific for humans to force amendments, but also to follow different solutions to precede – a never-ending process. Today we assume that the history of an institution cannot be seen uncoupled by the persons in charge and the collections, which means, the history is affected by persons and collections. Thus, an extensive discussion has started about what archives represent, what they present, what is missing, etc. "We are what we keep. We keep what we are", Terry Cook (2011) concisely summarized.

Since more than 125 years sound recordings have been made, starting from single, well calculated recordings which represent special acoustic memories of a distinct situation up to nonstop recording of events, everyday life etc. Difficult access to some special historical recordings has changed to an open and easy access, e.g. on the internet. Considering such transformation questions and discussions have arisen. Where are archives going , what consequences have to be considered?

A rather recent phenomenon is the growing importance of heritage awareness. It is possible to look back to a sounding history, to remember sounds. The intangible cultural heritage turned out to be a challenge and a chance to preserve, present and discuss sound recordings from past and present. UNESCO's "memory of the World" program has put archives and museums to the fore. UNESCO's statement underlining that the world's heritage belongs to all, should be fully preserved and protected and should be permanently accessible without hindrance, has given a strong input. Meanwhile, collaborative (field and documentation) work is state-of-the-art. Archives are tuned out to be meeting places for discussion on eye levels and exchange of experiences.

We need archives to experience the past, to evoke and arrange memory. It is (still) worth collecting and preserving musical impressions of a distinct time, and it is necessary to document the genesis, the content, the performers and creators of the recording. Nev-

ertheless, only the critical approach promises some valuable and appropriate information. This round table has assembled specialists dealing with sound archiving respectively sound archives. Each of them has approached the topic from another angle. In the very beginning of sound archiving only a few institutions and researchers were active in many different regions. Today, institutions and/or researchers from a distinct country actively collect such worldwide spread recordings important for their country or region.

In that case new "national" archives have come into existence gathering relevant sound recordings and still producing sound documentations. A completely different approach, namely the democratization of archives by broadening the definition and understanding, has originated in the digital age. As a result, discourses on inquiring memory, on archives as sites of self-representation and on shared research practices have taken place. A further up-to-date approach has analyzed the role of the internet for institutions (sound archives) and their users and researchers. Four critical questions, if the internet would be an archive, if the term "archive" could be applied to the vast universe of sound accessible online, if complete online access to institutions' collections would be offered, and if artificial intelli- gence would be a challenge or a threat to sound archives, have led to issues and challenges discussed vis-à-vis technical, ethical and legal aspects.

We have to rethink "old" archives, and we have the chance to considerate new ways of archiving and archival goals. Some questions remain: what are the goals today? Do we need "traditional" archives we discuss? Which role does the internet play and how will the advanced digital age change those concepts of a library, an archive or museum as they are inherited from antiquity (cf. Edmundson 2004:4)?

Ethnomusicology today is a much-dispersed discipline and very specialized in any aspect (cf. ICTMD and its Study Groups). Thus, the research focus and interest vary a lot. Similarly, any researcher's and user's expectation of a sound archive, the use and purpose differ a lot. Such an observation has been present during the round-table as well. Therefore, each contribution has to be seen separately with the advantage of receiving special aspects to the topic and the possibility to form one's own opinion. The topic "archive" over time is a vast field. Contrary approaches make it difficult to reach a discursive talk. Probably, it still needs some time to overcome strict attitudes and to find a linkage of perspectives concerning encounters with the sound archive.

Sandro Natadze

The Significance of the Archive

Great interest in Georgian folk music emerged, especially in the 20th century, both within the country and abroad. This was the period when recording technologies were developing. The convergence of these two factors led to the richness of audio recordings of folk songs in Georgia's archives. These recordings are now found in various archives, museums, institutions, or private collections. Starting from the 20th century, efforts were

made to collect scattered audio recordings worldwide, led by individuals such as Anzor Erkomaishvili, David Khukhunaishvili, Joseph Megrelidze, and others. This process continues to this day, as interest in Georgian music has always been present in the world and especially in Europe. As a result, unique audio recordings of Georgian folk songs are preserved in archives and private collections across the world.

However, before we begin searching for examples of Georgian folk music in various parts of the world, it is essential, as a first step, to make every effort to discover what material we already possess within Georgia.

To get a comprehensive understanding of the archival field, we need to start from when archival work in Georgia was institutionally established. The system we follow to- day largely stems from the Soviet Union. My experience working in various archives and institutions allows me to assess the general approach to archives and archival work during the Soviet era. Although archival work in Georgia was indeed formalized during Soviet times, the same model applied to Georgian archives as it did to other Soviet republics. Even the registration books were distributed uniformly across all republics. Despite this seemingly solid system, archival work was still not fully developed. What does this mean? The personnel working in numerous organizations, particularly those involved in ex- peditions, would sometimes submit their materials to the institute, while other times they would take them home and work from there. Consequently, after their deaths, in many cases, these recordings were lost for various reasons. We have many unfortunate examples of such incidents in Georgia. This casual handling of archival collections—taking, submitting, carrying, and moving materials—led to the loss of several unique records.

However, this free circulation of audio recordings also yielded some positive outcomes. It is possible to come across phonographic recordings of Georgian folk songs in organizations or institutions that have no direct connection with music or audio archives. I remember when I discovered an audio recording of a Georgian folk song in a place where it shouldn't have been. When I have asked how such recordings ended up in these places, the typical response has been, "The director just had it at home, brought it in, and left it here."

There are many instances where preserved audio recordings do not indicate the name of the person who submitted them, which creates significant problems. In some cases, just knowing a name could help provide a wealth of additional information or lead to the discovery of new materials.

The process of organizing this system and creating a truly solid foundation began in independent Georgia. Efforts were made to investigate already submitted materials, study them, and update catalogs. To this, the gradual digitization of audio recordings and the creation of digital databases were added.

In this regard, it is impossible not to mention the project carried out by the International Centre for Polyphony, in partnership with others, between 2005 and 2007. During

this project, wax cylinders preserved in various archives and institutions in Georgia were digitized. The significance of this project was due to the fact that wax cylinders were digitized in Georgia, which the country was technically unable to handle. As a result, it became necessary to bring in a specialist from Austria, who brought the equipment needed for the digitization of the wax cylinders.

This example brings me to one of the biggest challenges regarding phono recordings preserved in Georgia—the digitization and transfer of these materials to digital platforms. There is a significant problem with the digitization of phono recordings in Georgia.

Although most of the older recordings in our archives are stored on magnetic tapes, which are not particularly difficult to play in Georgia, many organizations still hold undigitized tapes labeled "Unknown Recording." In most cases, the content of these tapes is simply unknown. The primary issue with the digitization of these materials is financial, as many organizations lack the funds to digitize the magnetic tapes.

However, large archives that do not face financial difficulties in digitization encounter other problems. One such issue is the lack of specialized staff. As a result, employees of some archives, who may not have expertise in Georgian folk music, rely solely on the information written on the tape or cassette boxes, which is sometimes incorrect. Unfortunately, specialists are often not involved in the compilation of these catalogs.

The richness of audio recordings in Georgia's archives is also influenced by the country's multiethnic population. Unique audio recordings of ethnic minorities living in Georgia are preserved in these archives, including Armenian, Azerbaijani, Jewish, Dagestani, Chechen, and other recordings. Unfortunately, the same issues arise here, with many of these recordings having incorrect descriptions. To address this problem, it is necessary to involve specialists to revise and correct the catalogs.

I became most familiar with the situation in Georgia's archives and various institutions after I began the project «Cataloging the Archival Materials of Georgian Folklore,» supported by the State Folklore Centre. The goal of the project is to house the catalogs of various institutions across Georgia in a single website, Folkcatalog.ge, which will encompass not only audio materials but also video, photographic, and handwritten documents.

This project allows us to look closely at each archive, understand their problems, and work together to find solutions.

Gerda (Chair):

Thank you, Sandro. We go on with Abdullah Akat. He is a professor at Istanbul University. To know we are a very international group coming from Georgia, Turkey, Portugal, Argentina and the UK… So we go on with Abdullah and hearing from the case in Turkey. Thank you very much.

Abdullah:

Thank you so much, Gerda. Good morning, everyone. Today we will mostly talk

about **the traditional concepts of sound archiving and the various modalities that have shaped this practice globally.**

However, I would like to focus on the diverging modalities in my speech. While the foundational principles of sound archiving have been largely standardized over the past 125 years, primarily through technological advancements and integration into fields such as ethnomusicology. The reality is that the structures and practices of sound archiving differ significantly across regions and contexts. These divergences are shaped by varying political, economic, and intellectual environments.

Therefore, in this talk, I will keep the historical overview of sound archiving without touching on its origins and the development of core traditional concepts such as fidelity, medium preservation, cataloging, and accessibility. I will explore how political, economic, and cultural contexts influence sound archiving practices globally, drawing on examples from different regions. Finally, I will offer a brief case study of Türkiye, contextualizing its approach to sound archiving within broader global trends.

Although traditional concepts of sound archiving are foundational for all archival structures, the way they are applied can vary greatly from one region to another. First, I would like to define the concept of modalities in sound archiving. Modalities refer to the different methods, structures, and practices used in creating and maintaining sound archives.

These modalities are generally shaped by each region's unique political, economic, and intellectual environment. Let's take Europe as an example. In countries like Germany, Austria, France, and the UK, sound archiving has long been intertwined with academic and governmental institutions. Significant resources have been invested to preserve archives as part of cultural heritage, despite some temporary difficulties.

These countries often set the global standard for sound archiving practices, emphasising precision, academic rigour, and state-sponsored preservation programmes. In these settings, digitisation and advanced cataloguing techniques were implemented early, allowing archives to be accessible to both researchers and the public.

On the other hand, in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa or parts of South Asia, archiving practices have developed differently. The combination of economic constraints, colonial histories, and oral traditions means that some archiving is often more fragmented. In some areas, there is still reliance on analogue recordings, as digitisation projects are often underfunded or poorly resourced.

Additionally, political instability or changing government priorities can make long-term preservation efforts difficult. Yet in many of these regions, local knowledge systems and oral traditions offer rich alternative approaches to archiving sound and preserving cultural memory, through methods like storytelling and community-centred practices.

Now, I would like to extend these influences a little further and give some examples. Political factors: Politics plays a central role in determining what is archived, how it is

achieved, and who has access to the archive. In some cases, political regimes actively promote sound archiving as a means of preserving national identity and cultural heritage. In others, archives are subject to censorship or controlled by authoritarian govern- ments. In South Africa, for example, sound archives were used both to preserve Indige- nous music and to promote apartheid-era propaganda. While certain archives documented the musical traditions of Black South Africans (for detailed information about Kalman's modality, you can see an article published in the *Musicology Journal*). To conclude, sound archiving is far from a uniform practise, while traditional concepts such as fidelity, format preservation, cataloguing and accessibility remain important, different regions around the world approach these challenges in unique ways. Political, economic and intellectual conditions shape how sound archives are structured, resulting in a rich diversity of modalities. In the case of Turkey, sound archiving has been deeply influenced by national identi-

ty, political history and economic factors, resulting in a unique approach that both parallels and diverts from Western practises. As we move forward in the digital age, it will be cru- cial to continue exploring these different modalities and to ensure that the sound archives we create and maintain are inclusive of all voices, especially those that have been histor- ically **marginated (***marginalised?)*, economically weakened and intellectually limited. Thank you for your attention.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you, Abdullah, for your presentation opening. Another field, an additional field, which was discussed already, but now comes the test. Susanna will continue and we will hear from her.

Audience (Frank):

Can I ask a technical question before you move on?

Chair (Gerda):

This kind of question is allowed.

Audience (Frank):

I have a technical question to you, Abdullah:

This Karma Archive, is there a mechanism to maintain its stability over time? So, media change, investment change. Is there any mechanism which makes sure that automatically the media are transformed into other media, let's say from tapes to CDs to cloud storage, etc.?

Abdullah:

I think you mean after digitisation?

Audience (Frank):

Yes.

Abdullah:

Of course, we use a special software from Jens. We created it a few years ago. For ex- ample, when you want to relate one audio to another, you can easily find it in this sys-

tem. Also, it is very important to catalogue in this system, because if an expert — maybe I can say a field expert, because it's a very focused archive, it's a Black Sea music archive — for example, if you focus on a record from Crimea, and then you want to reach another recording from Romania or Bulgaria or Turkey, you can find it easily because of these relations in the system, in the software. But of course, a practitioner, or maybe I can say a field worker, has to enter this data very carefully in this system, in this research background.

That's why I say in my presentation, it's an epistemological thing.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you. Please, Susanna.

Susanna:

So, I can use this one because I want to read and then use my PowerPoint. Thank you so much for including me in this roundtable, and thank you for this wonderful organisation.

I'm just shifting now to another field in the sound archive studies, and address another kind of concept related to archives. I think it's interesting because we have complementary perspectives in this roundtable.

The Democratization of Archives in the Digital Age:
Enquiring Memory, Representation, and Research

In recent decades, the proliferation of digital technologies and the internet as a network aggregator has fundamentally transformed the nature of archives, reshaping not only what they store but also how they are classified, accessed, and perceived. Archives, traditionally defined as collections of historical sources or documents, have undergone a profound shift in meaning and purpose: once the exclusive domain of institutions, archivists, and scholars, archives are now more accessible to the public, allowing individuals and communities to engage in the preservation of their own memory in ways that were previously unimaginable. In the case of sound archives –dedicated to sound and music – this situation is even more evident, as the tools to record, store, and organize sound items are highly accessible and interoperable for those familiar with digital technologies. People can use their own cell phones to record or digitize sounds and music from physical sources, then directly upload the resulting files to a dedicated webpage. These files can be organized through an open-access database and enriched with metadata. By creating their own sound archive and using a webpage to make it visible, individuals can share their personal collections with others, promoting a global effort to preserve, expand, and safeguard these sounds and memories. This democratization has endowed archives with a new type of power, one that is more participatory and inclusive, facilitating self-representation and promoting different type of archival practices. This part of the text explores the im-

plications of this shift, examining how the digital age has broadened our understanding of sound archives, enhanced their societal value, and raised critical questions about the new challenges of memory preservation, focusing on the relationship between the so-called citizen science practices and institutional roles.

Broadening the Definition and Understanding of Archives

The digitization of information and the widespread access to the internet have broadened the general understanding of what constitutes an archive. No longer confined to physical repositories of official documents, archives today can include digital records, personal narratives, multimedia, and even social media posts. I'm quoting Erik Ketelaar (2017) in his argument about the displacement of the archives but also Miguel García, who has been working deeply about new archive concepts in the case of music and sound (2023). This expanded conception of what an archive is reflects the increasing diversity of human experiences in ways to access, generate, classify and safeguard memory in our days. In fact, digital archives often allow users to navigate, search, and interact with materials in ways that were previously impossible with traditional archives. As a result, more people have access to historical sources, not just scholars or researchers, democratizing knowledge and allowing for a more inclusive understanding of history.

This transformation is significant because archives play a central role in how societies remember, interpret, and represent their past. Historically, archives have often been curated by institutions of power, with limited input from marginalized or underrepresented groups. As such, the contents of many traditional archives reflect the dominant narratives and interests of those in control, while silencing or erasing the experiences of others (Schwartz & Cook, 2002). The digital revolution, however, has challenged this dynamic by making it possible for individuals, communities, and organizations to create their own archives. This shift allows for the preservation and dissemination of diverse modes of representing memory, enriching the historical record and giving voice to those who were previously excluded. One of the most complete publications about this topic was published in 2017, where the editors Anne J Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J Lau put together a collection of texts under the general title *Research on Archives Multiverse*, addressing the complexity and plurality of approaches related to archives today.

Archives as Sites of Self-Representation

The democratization of archives has also originated a self-empowerment of individuals and communities who take now control of their own narratives. With the tools provided by digital platforms, people can now document, share, and preserve their own histories without relying on institutions to validate or curate their experiences. This opportunity for self-representation is particularly important for marginalized communities, whose stories have often been omitted or misrepresented in official records (Caswell, 2016). For exam-

ple, many Indigenous communities have utilized digital archives to preserve their cultural heritage, oral histories, soundscapes, and traditional knowledge and musical repertoires (Christen, 2012). Similarly, grassroots movements and advocacy groups have created digital collections to document social justice struggles, such as the Black Lives Matter movement or LGBTQ+ rights activism (Flinn, 2011). These archives not only serve as repositories of memory but also as tools for political emancipation, helping communities to assert their identity, resist erasure, and challenge dominant narratives.

Moreover, the ability to create and manage one's own archive opens new possibilities for personal and collective memory. In the age of social media and online content creation, individuals regularly contribute to what Andrew Hoskins defines as an "informal archive of contemporary life" (Hoskins, 2009). Personal blogs, Instagram posts, YouTube videos, and other digital artifacts serve as forms of self-archiving, allowing people to curate their own digital legacy. This phenomenon raises important questions about the role of individuals as archivists of their own lives, the ethics of data storage, and the long-term preservation of digital records in an age of rapid technological change.

Shared Research Practices and the Role of Citizen Science

The rise of digital archives has also fostered greater collaboration between professional archivists, scholars, and the general public. In the case of music and sound, shared research practices – which I define as "a way of producing collective knowledge on or about music by putting together different subjects who owns different musical knowledges and experiences, professional and non-professional researchers" (Sardo 2018: 231), often facilitated by online platforms, enable more participatory and collaborative approaches to archival work. This collaboration, sometimes referred to as «citizen archivism» or «citizen science,» allows non-professional archivists to contribute to the preservation and interpretation of historical records along with professional archivists. Projects such as crowdsourcing efforts to transcribe historical documents including music manuscripts, identifying photographs, or mapping historical events have brought together diverse groups of people to engage in collective research. This is the case of projects carried out at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C, the Rodhe Island University Archives but also at the University of Aveiro, Portugal, in which I've been quite engaged.

According to my experience, this collaborative approach to archives prompts significant questions that are critical to address today. **First**, it challenges traditional hierarchies of expertise. Who has the authority to decide what is valuable or historically significant? In the past, archivists and historians have played the central role in making these de- cisions, but the rise of citizen archivism suggests that non-experts can also contribute valuable insights and perspectives (Shilton & Srinivasan, 2007). As a result, archives are becoming more reflective of the diverse experiences and knowledge of the broader public. **Second**, the growing importance of citizen science in archival processes raises ques- tions about

the validation of research. As more people become involved in creating, cu- rating, and analyzing archives, how can the accuracy and reliability of information be ensured? While professional archivists adhere to established standards and practices, the involvement of non-professionals introduces new challenges in maintaining the integrity of the historical record. However, this also highlights the potential for innovative method- ologies and the development of new standards that incorporate both professional expertise

and community input (Huvila, 2010).

Finally, the involvement of citizen scientists and amateur archivists raises important questions about the future of institutional archives. As individuals and communities increasingly create their own archives, will traditional institutions, such as libraries, museums, and national archives, retain their authority and relevance? Or will the decentralization of archives lead to a more pluralistic and fragmented approach to memory preservation? These questions are particularly pressing because digital technologies have made it easier for information to be stored outside of traditional archival systems, potentially bypassing institutional gatekeepers altogether (Cox, 2007).

Conclusion

The democratization of archives in the digital age – and sound archives in particular – has reshaped how societies understand, store, and access historical records. It has given individuals, communities, and non-professional archivists unprecedented opportunities to participate in the preservation of memory, challenging traditional hierarchies of expertise and opening new avenues for self-representation. At the same time, this transformation raises important questions about the future of professional archival practices, the role of institutions, and the validation of research in an increasingly decentralized and participatory world. As citizen science and shared research practices continue to grow in importance, society must grapple with these questions to ensure that archives remain inclusive, reliable, and reflective of diverse experiences and knowledge. Ultimately, the future of archives will depend on the continued balance between democratization, professional standards, and the evolving role of technology in preserving the past for future generations.

Thank you.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you Susanna for your presentation. As you all see, we are on the journey. The shift- ing of archives is evident with different possibilities. And Miguel now will tell us about the technical background and what that will bring to us with all our ideas on how to open archives, giving voice to many people.

Sorry, I apologise that I didn’t introduce the speakers, but you can find their biographies in the booklet. It’s not that I’m impolite, I only wanted to save time. Here we are. Miguel, please.

Miguel:

Thank you all for coming, and my gratitude to the organisers for the invitation. Thank you also Gerda for organising this round table.

Before I begin my presentation, I would like to make clear two points. The first is that I will present ideas that are valid or apparently valid in the cultural and academic context in which I was trained and work.

Secondly, I don't know if these ideas are valid beyond that context. For instance, I don't know. I will focus on sound archives, but maybe the ideas remain valid for other kinds of archives or sources… We'll see.

Some key questions about sound archives

This contribution focuses on one of the main current challenges for sound archives in the field of ethnomusicology: the transformations prompted by the rise of the Internet and the emergence of a series of co-occurring technologies. Before approaching this topic, it is necessary to clarify three points. First, I will be presenting ideas that are valid within the cultural and academic context in which I was trained and currently work: a framework of thought and routines mainly shaped by Latin American and European theories and methodologies. It should be noted that the ideas presented herein may not remain valid outside of their original context. Second, I will focus on sound archives. However, some of the ideas may also be applicable to other types of sources. Finally, although the current transformations constitute a highly complex issue, I will concentrate on just a few of their key aspects.

In the academic environment influenced by European ideas, discussions on sound archives began in the late 19th century. These discussions accompanied the development of technical devices related to sound, as well as the intense debates within ethnomusicology concerning relationships with people in the field, the colonialist legacy of the discipline, and the legal framework surrounding the use of sound recordings. Mostly, the discussions have concentrated around three aspects: technical, ethical and legal, and theoretical ones:

0. The discussions on technical aspects mainly revolved around storage, classification, preservation, restoration, and accessibility. The main questions centered on how to address these concerns and which technologies to use in order to achieve better and more durable results. One of the most critical moments in these debates was the transition from analog to digital systems and the emergence of different types of carriers. These topics likely make up the majority of the literature related to sound archives.

0. The discussions around ethical and legal focused on issues such as ownership of the recordings and other sources, the asymmetries between researchers and non-researchers, the responsibility of the discipline face to the critical situations –wars, poverty, discrimination, violence, force migration, etc.–, among other concerns. In many countries, a critical moment in this debate emerged when decolonial perspective entered the academic

scene because many colleagues realized that the discipline had been accomplice of the colonial power. Dis- cussions surrounding the restitution of sound recordings represent one of the more sensitive issues within the sphere of ethical and legal considerations.

0. The discussions on theoretical aspects reached the framework of the sound archive somewhat later compared to other disciplines. Although delayed, they nevertheless entered a critical phase due to the reverberation of Michel Foucault's ideas on the archive and discourse (1969), Jacques Derrida's deconstructive theory (1997), and later, the so-called "archival turn". This sequence of criticism led to a reconsideration of archival practices and expanded the meaning of the term archive. Today, the word archive encompasses a wide range of phenomena and practices.

Currently, the Internet and related technologies are among the most discussed topics in the field of archiving. In this contribution, I will briefly explore some of the challenges the Internet presents for both institutions and users by examining four critical questions:

1. Is the Internet an archive?
2. Can the term "archive" be applied to the vast universe of sound accessible online?
3. What happens when an institution offers online access to its collections?
4. Is Artificial Intelligence a challenge or a threat to sound archives?

These questions likely represent some of the main concerns regarding the current state of sound archives and are beginning to occupy a central place in the academic debate about the ongoing metamorphosis in sound storage, distribution, and usage.

1. **Is the Internet an archive?**

This is a very common question, but it is, in fact, incorrectly phrased. The Internet is a protocol (TCP/IP) that connects networks and computers around the world. As is often said, it is a "network of networks". It is a medium that serves as a gateway to various types of archives –institutional, commercial, and personal. Consequently, it can never be considered an archive itself. Things are not ***in*** the Internet, but accessible ***through*** it. Nonetheless, behind this question lies a very relevant concern, which can be more accurately expressed in the second question.

0. Can the term "archive" be applied to the vast universe of sound accessible online?

As is often the case, there are multiple perspectives on this issue. Some researchers view the sound universe accessible online as chaotic –lacking central control, marked by uncoordinated actions, and involving many actors operating without a shared archival framework (Ernst 2006, 2013; Tello 2018). Within the core of these perspectives, the terms *anarchive* and *anarchivism* were coined. Some of these researchers use the term *archive* to refer to specific segments of this sound universe, arguing that the Internet functions as a gateway to various types of archives, including institutional, commercial, crowdsourced, personal, and transactional ones (Beer and Burrows 2013). There are at least two reasons

to support this perspective, particularly the use of the term "archive" to describe sound expressions available online. First, archival practices from the physical environment –such as storage, classification, preservation, restoration, and accessibility– continue to apply in the virtual environment, although with new tools like hyperlinks, Uniform Resource Locators (URLs), browsers, tagging, digital footprints, digital object identifiers (DOIs), and many others –like piracy. The second reason for continuing to use the term *archive* is that there is no alternative word that encompasses all of its meanings while being less ambiguous or confusing.

Another perspective that is not oppositional but rather complementary has also been proposed. This perspective argues that the term "archive" is appropriate for describing the entire universe of sound accessible through the Internet. The term *global sound archive* has been coined to refer to this universe (García and González, in press). Any sound file potentially accessible via the Internet that contains a recording made with digital devices, a digitized version of an analog recording, or the product of a creation made entirely through digital means is considered part of this archive. In this way, a wide range of sound expressions are grouped under this concept, such as music, soundscapes, voice messages, podcasts, sounds for digital instruments, and more. In conclusion, both the narrow and broad definitions of "archive" seem valid for labeling the vast universe of sound that we access through the screens of our devices.

0. What happens when an institution offers online access to their collections?

When an institutional sound archive is uploaded, many things happen. First, the institution enters a highly competitive niche, where it sometimes must compete with the versatility of powerful streaming platforms (like Spotify, Tidal, Apple Music, and others) as well as large virtual repositories (such as the Internet Archive, Europeana, and many others). Sometimes, institutional online archives appear outdated or somewhat limited compared to commercial platforms.

Second, in the niche of online sound, the boundaries between institutional and non-in- stitutional archives tend to blur. This phenomenon is driven mainly by three factors: on the one hand, the presence of the same sound files across various websites; on the other, the hosting of recordings produced for research purposes on commercial platforms. For example, it is no longer surprising to find field recordings on YouTube or Spotify that actually belong to institutional repositories –for instance, many digital versions of Alan Lomax's LPs are included in Spotify's catalog. Finally, we must also consider the power of users to create their own archives by mixing sound expressions from different sources –both institutional and commercial– on their computer screens and storing them in their device memory.

Third, the Internet is technologically controlled by the so-called Big Tech companies –Google, Apple, Meta, Amazon, and Microsoft. This means that institutions offering

online access to their collections are to some extent dependent on the decisions made by those companies. Both competitiveness and dependency are entirely new challenges and risks for non-profit institutions which commonly offer free access to their collections.

0. Is Artificial Intelligence a challenge or a threat for sound archives?

This is another common concern regarding the present and future of archival practices in the public sector. In the private sector, such as streaming platforms or any other area of the music industry, AI is already widely implemented. But in the public sector, it is still in the infancy. Frequently, AI has been evaluated in two opposite directions: it triggers fascination to some people and fear to other. However, some voices are reminding us that this new development may not be as likeable or as alarming as it initially appears. Some months ago, a colleague from Aveiro University –Portugal– (Novai 2024) demotivated any radical position on AI with a few sentences. He expressed: a) AI does not possess human-like intelligence because it does not make decisions based on emotion or intuition,

b) it is not completely artificial because its development requires natural resources c), it is not conscious because it operates according to models and rules, d) it is not creative in the human sense because it does not operate with inspiration e) it is not autonomous because it requires programming, training, and human supervision, and f) it is not omniscient because its knowledge is limited to what has previously been given to it and what it has learned.

Undoubtedly, the question if the AI is a challenge or a threat for sound archives is not easy to answer. But it is necessary to make an attempt. We should be prudent when evaluating its consequences, as our colleague from Aveiro University recommended. Perhaps, a wise position could be right in the middle of fascination and fear.

Conclusions

The rise of the Internet "poked the hive" among researchers and archivists, prompting renewed discussions about the technical, ethical, legal, and theoretical aspects of sound archives. The main transformations brought about by the Internet in the field of sound have affected both the distribution of and access to sound files. These transformations, in turn, have led to changes in other dimensions of sound usage, such as, creation, storage, and listening practices. The discussions on all these topics are unfolding within a technological and media landscape shaped by technocapitalism, hyperconnectivity, and persistent inequalities in the connectivity and Internet access. Hopefully, this shifting –and at times hostile– context will instill a renewed sense of critical engagement within our disciplines, particularly in the field of archival practices. It is urgent that this critical perspective focuses on how to make institutional archives richer in metadata, more versatile, and more appealing when compared to commercial repositories.

Thank you very much.

Holly:

Hello everyone. Susan and Holly here. We are presenting the *Voic- es of the Ancestors* podcast. I wanted to skip forward a few slides just to give some context, because we've heard academic papers, and — who are we? We're not academics. We are both singers and enthusiasts of Georgian music. We rep- resent *Maspindzeli*, a Georgian choir in London. We've both spent a long time living in Georgia. I lead the Georgian choir in Oxford.

Susan:

I have the luxury of being retired, but I also have a background in both education and European funding, because I used to work in the charity sector. Often, I worked with drawing on other people's resources — how they catalog them and how accessible (or otherwise) they were. So, from personal experience, it's interesting to hear from people whose professions align with that.

Holly:

So that's some context for our presentation. *Voices of the Ancestors* is a podcast about Georgian polyphonic psalms and the women who sing them. Our main goal is to bring songs and stories from Georgia to an international audience — to give a platform to as many women as possible who sing Georgian songs.

These are some of the platforms where you can find and listen to the podcast. We wanted to show you our back catalog of episodes — I think we've made about 80 across two seasons. You'll probably spot Nana in a minute. Oh, she's gone... oh, there she is. These are some of the women we've interviewed and the episodes we've made.

We thought we'd give you a little clip, a small example. This is from **Tamar Buadze**, a choir leader. (The translator is **Zoe Perret**.)

"There is one thing that I noticed, and I think it's important. Our ancestors — the people who used to sing songs — were much more connected to their body, and I think this connection is lost today. I hear it in the performances that I hear. So I always tell my students to try and feel that you're standing on the grass — that you're standing on the earth. Because if you feel that, you necessarily feel that the whole body is engaged. Our ancestors — they weren't thinking about the position of the voice, or whether they should do this or that. They were just singing with their body, in their everyday life — they … just were naturally singing…

Holly:

That was a small clip to give you an example of what an episode sounds like. I think it's nice to connect it with **Bia Zhuzhunadze's** paper from the other day about the kinesthetic aspects of performance. Did you want to say something? (asking Susan)

Susan:

Yes. From the other presentations, it clearly shows the role of an editor — the power in choosing what goes into a podcast episode. There's power in the person doing the trans-

lation — how they interpret the words they hear — and then there's the editorial process in deciding what stays and what ends up on the cutting room floor.

Holly:

The main thing we wanted to talk about today is the accessibility of podcasts. A podcast is available worldwide — wherever there's internet — and it's free for every- one. For our podcast, we've made transcripts for every episode, and they're both search- able and translatable.

Susan:

And they're in English.

Holly:

Yes. According to our hosting site, SoundCloud, we've had 11,000 listens from over 50 countries. The main countries are the USA, the UK, and Georgia.

Susan:

I'm not sure how clear it is on this map, but sometimes little boxes pop up from parts of the world we've never seen before. So I know we've had listeners from China and Japan — which always surprises me — and I just wanted to share that.

Holly:

We wanted to show how to find the transcripts on our website. This is our site: voicesancestors.co.uk — just go to the *Transcripts* tab, and you'll find all the episodes there. It's free to access because we are a completely listener-funded podcast. That means we're not beholden to sponsors or advertisers — we can really talk about whatever we want and interview whoever we want. Our main focus is to make the best podcast we can, not to promote products.

We're independent. We started this in lockdown, from our homes, and taught ourselves how to do it. We don't have any kind of institutional control over what we create.

This is how we manage it: the people who listen to the podcast support us on platforms like Patreon and Ko-fi, which are subscription platforms. People give around $5 or

$6 a month, and when we have enough funds, we make an episode.

Susan:

And I was reflecting on the longevity of archives — because you could say that our website, the transcripts, and the podcast itself *are* an archive. But only for as long as we keep paying the hosting fees.

Holly:

And finally, we wanted to pose a question: has anyone here used podcasts as a source of information? It was nice to see that in some of the presentations at the symposium, our podcast was quoted — so, thank you.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you very much for introducing this website — which is a podcast, but also

functions a bit like an archive.

It was emotional — that's what I was trying to say.

As usual in a roundtable, the moderator is allowed to ask questions.

I have two — at least three — and the third one will go to the audience. And my questions are not limited to any one presentation but what every representation touched to some extent. In that respect, I would like to start this discussion. What are the pros and cons? You can also say advantages and disadvantages in the digital … everyone was talking about. We are now in the digital age. What is it? I would like to ask my col- leagues here their perspective, their personal perspective on this phenomenon. Would it be correct to do it in the order of presentations, or is a sudden one okay? Then I would like to ask Nana to keep it short.

Nana:

Yes. It's going to be very short.

Chair (Gerda):

No, you can say what you want.

Nana:

No, it's because my brain now works only in one direction — towards pros. I think it's wonderful. I cannot think of any cons regarding digital … but I know that it makes things very easy, accessible. But it's also important that it's technically affordable (easy to access?).

Chair (Gerda):

And you also receive all the information you would like to have with these means?

Nana:

Well, the question is how well things are archived digitally, because it can be done well or poorly. Even if you visit a library or archive, if the collection is insufficient or incomplete, it remains a problem. Digitalisation doesn't change this — things need to be done properly, and then it's beautiful.

Chair (Gerda): :

Thank you. Abdullah, what's your impression?

Abdullah:

I can say accessibility is a good point of the process. Also, preservation is important but it's discussable how we can preserve things in digital formats, sometimes it can be critical. I think there are both pros and cons. Searchability and creating metadata are pros of this digital system. One more pro is interactivity.

On the opposite side, obsolescence of formats is a con — it depends, this pros and cons thing. Data integrity is always difficult and can cause data loss, which is a con. Also, cost is a con — large digitisation projects are expensive. It's not always possible to digitise material and keep it safely stored. And I think the most important con is ethical and legal issues. Maybe we can discuss it more later. That's all for now.

Chair (Gerda):

Okay. Susanna, please.

Susanna:

This is a good question for a full conference of five days. I'll just use one or two examples. When I first came to archives — because archives came to me — I needed to start working on them.

My first idea was to go to Berlin because it's like a Mecca for ethnomusicologists. But the website was very old fashioned with nothing digitised. Then I went to Vienna and there were some digitised things, so I thought I'd go there because it seemed more open-minded. Gerard was there at the moment with these open mind ideas to open the archives — but I hadn't met Gerard before, it was a coincidence.

This is important today, everyone wants digital examples of an archive. If an institution hasn't moved to this philosophy, it's not good for the institution — it wasn't good in the past, and now it's more important.

But we can still listen to wax cylinders, and sometimes we cannot listen to digital soundboards, and that's a problem.

Digitalisation is not reserved for the future. It depends on many variables that don't depend on the archivist. For example, if a hacker came and destroyed the archive. This is something to think about because physical sources can still be listened to today even if they are more than 100 years old. A CD's long life is 20 years. And the cloud? We never know. It's very expensive also, very, very expensive.

We need to organise a conference to discuss this.

Chair (Gerda): :

If I may, just because it fits your comment. For established archives with huge collections, you can't digitise everything immediately. A wise person said 20 or 30 years ago that the digital age will bring us to the point where we only know what is digitised, and what we haven't digitised is gone.

Archives really struggle to digitise their collections.

Miguel:

Nice question. I don't find cons in the digital domain, but I find cons in the virtual domain. For example, a few days ago I found a field recording on Spotify.

Spotify is the most popular streaming platform in Central and South America. The recording was uploaded by Bernd Brabec de Mori, a famous Austrian ethnomusicologist. It was a field recording made in South America with native people on a commercial platform.

This sound file is now being manipulated by algorithms, artificial intelligence recommendation systems, and things like that. It's now being replicated, transformed, connected with images, disaggregated and aggregated with other sound files in playlists.

So, in the virtual domain, there are cons — legal and ethical risks. We must focus

not on the digital inscription of sound but on the virtual distribution of sound. That's the difference. Thank you.

Chair (Gerda): :

Thank you, very good verification.

… it is a good example. I remember seeing that as well. He made it public in the research community. I asked myself why? We know you must be seen and recognized, and with that recording, he is named everywhere.

That's something I can't explain because Bernd lived with those people for so long.

It's an interaction between personal standing and purpose of research.

Miguel:

Maybe soon we'll all be uploading our field recordings to Spotify, Amazon, I don't know.

Susan:

When I started learning Georgian folk songs, I could not hear Georgian women singing. I could not find these recordings. So publishing is partly how our project came about. I just give a counter argument — I would have loved it if somebody had uploaded their field recordings of Georgian women singing.

Holly:

The podcast wouldn't exist without the internet. We started in 2020 and recorded our interviews over Zoom even now when we record our interviews in person I think 95% of the work is done with the internet so that's a big pro.

Chair (Gerda):

Okay. There is first… I don't know (someone in the audience wants to reflect…)

Audience 1 (Bernard):

Thank you for several very interesting presentations. This is a reaction to the remark just made by Miguel. Miguel, are you serious that you found only one field recording on Spotify? Because there are tens of thousands of field recordings on Spotify (and I run a record company as you all know). All our releases are online. We have a digital distributor, and the distributor also brings those tracks to Spotify and we have something like five or 60000 tracks and they are all on Spotify. They are not all field recordings but at least 50% of those would be field recordings, I think. So, Okay, this is just my 10 cents of information.

Audience 2:

Thank you very much for the interesting insights. I'm not very well informed or deeply informed about this archive discussion and so forgive me if my question is really naive but I would like to know if there is any discussion on and thank you Miguel for your very important final remark because all the time I was thinking about the responsibility of archives, a responsibility towards our informants towards people who are or whose ancestors are recorded on those recordings. I would like to ask if there is any current discussion

exactly about what you, Miguel, touched upon in your last remark regarding the ethics of making public recordings of people who may not have signed any license or document, and allowing a researcher to make those recordings public. And is there any discussion regarding the benefits of the people recorded on those sound recordings or is there nowadays any discussion how the communities or bearers of intangible cultural heritage could financially even benefit from for example, making archival recording of the family members or of their own being public via CDs by the archive institution. How can the communities benefit from work that is made by archives towards making recordings accessible public digitized and so on. Is there any discussion about what possibilities these days bring to these matters? I'm sorry, so I have these two questions.

Chair (Gerda):

These two questions are one question and are a very big question. It is discussed every day or very long. We have touched this issue only, really touched but it is such a big issue which can't be answered in one sentence. So, there is discussion …

Audience 2:

So, is there any like official European or world body institution? Is there any chance to somehow coordinate this process or inform it with legal …

Susanna:

Yes there is. Miguel would answer this…

Chair (Gerda):

Please Miguel

Miguel:

I realised that around 8 or 9 LPs recorded by Alan Lomax, the famous North American collector, are in Spotify also. I discovered that 2 years ago. Ah yes, we have a huge discussion about your topic, absolutely.

But I don't know that they get money for communities. I don't know, but we are discussing that, of course. The legal, the economical and the ethical dimensions, of course.

It's very complex.

Chair (Gerda):

Now I'm a little bit out of my programme, so to say, because I didn't want to open for all questions. Is it possible that you keep your question for a few minutes?

Susanna:

Yes, let me just answer quickly to the question about the rights of people that are recorded. We are now facing difficult times in the universities and in Europe in particular. Because if we have a funding project, research project, we have to respect what is called the GDPR.

It means, I know in Portuguese it's very difficult for me, but in English it's General Data Protection Regulation. So we cannot put names, we cannot use the voices of people and everything else. At the same time, if we get funds, we need to respect the open access

science.

I mean all data must be public. So we are facing difficult times according to this ethic and at the same time, how to deal with the European policy of open science and at the same time, this protection of data. Because, for instance, these podcasts organised by Susan (and Holly), they speak about people, but as they are not connected with the university, well, they can deal with this contradiction.

But in our case, in the case of institutions, I was discussing this with **?????** , how they deal with this, and at the moment they are trying to ignore that this is a rule and more and more the rule that is asphyxiating the way as we make research. Because, of course, the communities, they have the right to say we don't want to be recorded or we don't want to be public in the website. Or we want to be recorded and we want to be there.

I remember in 2014, we were discussing this in our study group symposium in Paris. Because the archives of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, everything is open. They were very happy because origin (source) communities are trying to reach this archive and using their archives for their music, their own music.

At the same time, the Hungarians and all the Central Europe archives are like bunkers with everything is closed, so nobody can listen. So it's not easy to deal with this kind of contradictions. But there are pros and cons, again, when we have the open data system.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you Susanna. There are huge projects on legislation issues in that respect. We are still working. I have seen our time is running. I split all my ideas and I opened the floor you can ask whatever you want, otherwise we have no time for that.

Audience 3 (David):

Thank you for a really interesting discussion. There is a little bit of conflation of issues, I think. Every musician in the world, except for Taylor Swift, can have their music pirated on Spotify whether they are a non-professional folk musician or whether they are a professional folk musician. Conversely, I can buy a novel in a bookstore or I can find it in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. And the only difference is the Library of Congress is not commercial, but it follows standards of an archive. And Spotify doesn't follow standards of an archive.

And a bit of information about the Internet: The Internet is a collection of standards over which the big tech companies have very little influence. They do have representatives to the standard bodies. Especially Google, which is a participant in the Internet, Facebook and Amazon are mostly non-participants in the Internet. They are participants in the World Wide Web, which is not a body of standards.

But the Internet is a body of standards. And it seems to me that what a lot of people are talking about is the difference between the presence of standardisation and the absence of standardisation.

Audience 4 (Frank):

Can I clarify this?

David, I think what Miguel was referring to was that the big tech companies have some control over what we find in the Internet.

Audience 3 (David):

That's a choice. If you use Google, it's not a fact. It's a choice.

Audience 4 (Frank):

But it's a description of the situation. If as a normal person you now go to the Internet and search something, you have to make a choice which search engine you use and then this search engine controls what you find. Is this what you were referring to? Just for clarification…

Miguel:

You are my broker.

Audience 3 (David):

But Google search is not subject to any standards. That's the crucial issue.

Audience 5:

I have several remarks to several people. The thing about finding the recordings on Spotify. Well, I don't use Spotify. But I use Amazon Music and YouTube. And the crucial thing to me is that there is no information. There are song titles. You can learn nothing about it unless you already know it.

That is, I agree with you that the con is in the virtual realm, not so much in the fact of digitisation. I wanted to say something to Abdullah.

Another one of the categories that you had political and economic and so forth. Another one is religious. So that I'm thinking of the recordings of Klaus Wachsmann, which were field recordings from the 50s and before perhaps that were returned in a project to Uganda.

And the church was very resistant to this return. Because much of the music was in their terms pagan or irreligious and should not be archived, should not be accepted by the nation. Also another example of the political restrictions in the archive is that in what is called the New Order in Indonesia. When the communist leanings and… attributed communist sympathies were purged. Then all the music that was connected to the communist and so called communist programmes, they were all purged and are lost. It was a crime to keep them at home. So most people completely got rid of them. I think some researchers are trying to dig them up. Now one copy or two copies may exist.

Finally one thing that seems to be very important about archives is it's extremely important in my view that archives not be conceived of only as archives of field recordings. But commercial recordings also need to be included. As they are extremely important for historical documentation

Chair (Gerda):

May I suppose one question. Maybe only it fits in your question. Because our topic was traditional archives and new archives. And my question to all of you would be: how could or should an ideal archive today look like? So if anyone wants to start.

Audience 7 (Caroline):

I was going to say a really great example of lots of layers of interactivity and data and all sorts of data at **multidimensional levels** is the archive resulting from Frank Sherbaum and Nana and everybody's work. And the big question here is how to maintain **that sort of archive**. I wanted to ask Frank about the challenges facing him in the **longevity posterity** of that archive.

Audience N (Frank):

Well, you were now asking the question to the audience how we feel, how an archive looked like, and I would say provocatively, the way I feel that the ar- chive should look like is like the archive we produced for the project, computation- al Ethnomusicology of Traditional Georgian Vocal music over the last 10 years, I would say, and this is an archive which has been produced by Nana and myself. We did the field work plus a number of people who helped with the interfaces and one of the problems, which we faced there was **the interface**. The technical interfacing of audio and video, making it stable over time. **The biggest problem,** I see, is not money. You can get money if you really have ideas. The biggest problem is people. People who are knowledgeable and enthusiastic enough to spend their free time because they're always paid less than they deserve to really make this, to maintain this. If a browser changes, if an operating system changes, all a sudden some interfaces won't work anymore. A technician will spend days, weeks, sometimes longer to keep it up again. I don't want to say more, but if you are interested in how we feel an archive should look like, please look at the ar- chive, which is hosted at the University of Potsdam and Erlangen, and which is collecting all the material from five years of doing field work and analysis on Georgian vocal music mostly by Nana and myself and some other people from Erlangen university and **others**.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you very much. That's a wonderful example. But I must say that this one kind of archive, it's an only, only, no, it's a research archive. It's focused on Georgian music or Georgian singing. It's very close. And we have archives comprising **documents from all over the world**. How will you make the same level with such archives and archives? Well, it's a small archive in respect to other archives. I think I am completely with you. That would be an **ideal status**… But how to reach it for the **huge amount (of collections) we have**?

Audience N (Frank):

I cannot give you this answer. I try to solve my problem…

Audience N (Caroline):

Another important question then is envisaging what kind of archives we want in the future and writing that into the research protocols, the data protection policies, the funding in the funding proposals that then enable us to envisage not just the immediate archive that goes along with current protocols, but how it might be in the future because otherwise we're stuck by not being covered by those protocols and not having the funding built in that will enable the sort of maintenance work, on a **rolling maintenance policy basis** which Frank mentions his archive needs. That is then, foreseeing in advance rather than dealing with the problems in retrospect, **some of which we can't solve because we haven't got the signatures on the paper**.

Chair (Gerda):

That's something we would have liked that they had done in the past as well. We are doing now in that way. I agree, but maybe we…

Audience 7 (Mario Morello):

Thank you very much. It was a very interesting discussion. Thank you for your contributions. I missed the first half an hour at the round table, but I don't know if the question of sustainability came up in the discussion. To give you the context. With the dawn of the pandemic and this whole creation of the digital workspace, many people were claiming that it was very green and environmentally friendly, that we have tran- sitioned to digital workspace and we consume less and we drive less, and it's **paper- lessness and et cetera**. But actually it turned out to consume so much energy to sus- tain a digital workspace, that it was even less green at **some traditional workspaces**. And I'm wondering if there's ever a question about sustainability of changing millions and millions of analog materials to digital materials that have to be sustained in these databases for decades.

Susan Thompson:

It is a thought I too have had, because the thought of the cloud, that it feels so remote, but actually there are power stations generating the power to keep those **like cloud database** going.

Holly:

Mario asked, is there a conversation about the sustainability…

Audience N (Mario Morello):

I was asking because we're talking about the future, right? Yes. I was asking about the question, sustainability, which is **the future's question**, because turning all these analog materials, millions of them to digital materials creates … and requires enormous amount of energy… This is something that we have to think about. And I'm wondering if this is **part of the question** for people who work in archives for the future of archives.

Abdullah:

Sustainability is very important for the future, not only future, also in the past it was im- portant because some archives, you know, established in some years and then they

disappear. This digital workstations, it's very important also, but also practitioners who use this digital workstations is maybe **more important than this system**. But I would like to say another thing because **for Garda's question** as I see in the whole, there are many answers. There must be many answers because for the archival issues, the expectations are changeable from the different perspectives. So from the archives perspec- tives, from the performers perspective, from the researcher, for example, perspectives, all expectations can very changeable. For example, if I doubt what is an ideal archive as a per- former, my answer should, yeah. It must be in very high quality. So all recordings has been in very high quality and the accessibility is very important for me as a performer. I expected to have all these recordings in very good formats and best formats, and then I can use it without any legal regulations or **another thing**. But from the archives perspectives, of course the answer must be different. Also as a researcher, I can say an ideal archive must present me all recordings in very ordinary system, maybe in a good catalogue with information. Be- cause Philip said there was something on YouTube, but there's no information. So, from a researcher's perspective, it doesn't work but from the performer's perspective, it can work. So, it's very normal. There are many answers to t**his question. But** for the best quality sound, I can give an example. For example, Echon Ukraine is a good project. I know. You can find this on the web. It's the project and is funded by European Union. They recorded everything in the world, best quality. Even you can separate every single voice, and you can have all these materials on YouTube and on their website open access. As you see, there are **many answers to this question**. Thank you very much.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you, Abdullah. I suppose we have to close this round table.

Ulrich:

One question. I find … democratization is of course extremely important not only for the society, yes, for the society, but also for academic scholarship.There was a time, not in academic scholarship, but in the broader folk music discourse or strong resistance against phonograph.I have only two examples, but if you have more, in the coffee break, I would be happy to learn more. First is, Cecil Sharp in England, second is, Josef Pommer in Austria. They were not academic scholars but activists, which is **different thing**, but I think it's not only some late romanticist technophobia, but it is also the idea that there should not be primary sources that can be discussed by a community, that you should take the songs out of my hands from my song books. This is quite interesting in terms of history of scholarship and it goes on folk music.

Chair (Gerda):

Thank you, Ulrich…

Miguel announced that archive is a very wide term. We have seen or I have heard at least everybody has the idea of an archive a little bit in another niche and for the purposes you want to do it.

I would like to thank everyone, all those on the floor presenting and you the audience to introduce a lively discussion which is not over. The interesting thing is archives are an old-fashioned term and still they are in discussion and very lively. It was never the case when I started working in the archive. I was announced by my colleagues: oh, you pull it. Really, that is not a joke. I was not. It was the caseI would say 30 years ago and meanwhile archives have attracted so much attention, and you see there are a lot of discussions, a lot of approaches. We'll keep it and let's see where we are going .

Thank you very much.