

¹Preservation of African Oral Heritage through Research

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This paper addresses the relationship between field research and the preservation of oral heritage in Africa. While it recognizes that there are other novel approaches to preservation besides research, it nevertheless concentrates on how field researchers can contribute to the general effort of the preservation of Africa's invaluable intangible heritage, which many agree is threatened with extinction. The paper commences by defining oral heritage and participatory research in oral literature. It then proceeds to outline some of the causes of the decline in the popularity of oral literature. I conclude this discussion by suggesting novel ways in which African researchers can contribute to the preservation of oral literature as performance. Research has proved that oral heritage in Africa is in danger of disappearing if it is not appropriately conserved and preserved today. This is partly because people who directly live on, experience and perform it are mostly local artists, who get familiar with it, and with time take it for granted. They hardly pay attention to the collection and management of oral texts for wider usage.

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