Digital Preservation of Intangible cultural Heritage of the Nile Valley, Ethical Challenges

2nd SESSION 2021-2020 DU SÉMINAIREEUROPÉENINTERDISCIPLINAIRE ETINTERNATIONAL DE L'ECOLEDOCTORALE

Maison de la recherche Salle des Colloques Université de Lille SHS, 08/06/2022

Widad Mustafa El Hadi, Geriico, University of Lille

Sarah Hassan Elbeely, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Univerity of Khartoum

Cairo

EGYPT

Nile

Luxor

Kom Ombo

Aswan

L. Nasser

1

Abu Simbel

Wadi Halfa

2

3

Dongola

4

5

Napata

Atbara

SUDAN

6

Khartoum

New Halfa

Context and rationale

- Tangible and intangible cultural heritage is crucial for understanding societies and their history and therefore   needs a special attention.

- The wide adoption of new digital technologies, documenting, storing, visualizing and exhibiting cultural heritage assets became more affordable and reliable.

- Access to Information and Knowledge are considered as a Human Right

Access to Information and Knowledge as a Human Right, Ethical Dimensions

- Our interest in Ethics comes from one of the foundational principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which emphasizes on the ethical treatment of different cultures.

- From Paul Otlet (1868-1944) the Belgian visionary to the UNESCO WSIS, efforts have been made to guarantee and promote this right

- It is ethically and intellectually crucial to protect cultural and information diversity. From an ethical point of view, there is a need for a global and local access to information in any language, at any time and for any purpose for any individual, culture, ethnic groups, or domains. (Beghtol, 2002).

Access to Information and Knowledge as a Human Right, Ethical Dimensions

- **Ethics as an intimate process linked to language and culture.**

- We examine ethics under their cultural linguistic and social frames lined to cultural heritage preservation, dissemination and accessibility.

- We have to take into account the weight of cultures and languages in the preserving national identities and cultures

- All human activity takes place in definable social domains in which people share customs, habits, language and therefore also perceptions.

- Perception shapes how we comprehend what we know and therefore also how we know what we know (Smiragilia, 2012:14).

- Perception is shaped by culture.

Access to Information and Knowledge as a Human Right, Ethical Dimensions

- The concept of "culture" is essential given its impact on cultural heritage preservation

- *"Culture" describes in general the various phenomena that make up the collective beliefs and activities of a certain group of people. Discussions of culture refer generally to shared values, history, language, collective memory, social attitudes, preferences and practices*", (Beghtol, 2002).

- In Information Science, *Ethics* is framed by the philosophy of information a domain which investigates the conceptual nature and basic principles of information, including its ethical consequences.

Cultural Heritage Digital Processing and Preservation

- The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 2002, p. 21) defines "*Cultural Heritage'*
    - as *"an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expression and values and is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage".* It signifies the aesthetic, historical, social, spiritual or other special characteristics and values a place, an object or a custom may have for present and future generations.

- Hence 'Cultural Heritage' is a resource for economic, social and culturally sustainable development through the inter-institutional and multi sector cooperation.

- Its communication and promotion shows the real socio-cultural and economic values of cultural heritage

Cultural Heritage Digital Processing and Preservation

- The term 'Cultural Heritage' has changed content considerably in recent decades and it is not limited to monuments and museums or library collections

- It also incorporates **traditions or living expressions inherited from ancestors and passed on to future generations** and mainly includes **oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts** (UNESCO, n.d.).

Cultural Heritage Digital Processing and Preservation

- From the historical perspective 'Cultural Heritage' constitutes the memory of the living culture of the people but the concept expanded drastically and incorporated both tangible as well as intangible cultural traits.

- Coordinated efforts and experiences in the form of initiatives and projects are gaining momentum towards digitization of cultural heritage.

- Digitization facilitates the preservation of original heritage item in optimal circumstances and also provides a digital equivalent available for use by the public at large (Stefanovski, 2003).

The Role of Professional and Institutional Bodies in Developing Information and Knowledge Organization Ethics

- **The role of the UNESCO**

- The UNESCO focuses on the crucial role of Information, communication and knowledge as key drivers of development in globalized, multicultural, knowledge-based societies and discussed the means in which they can be used in order to strengthen ethical development and avoid unethical consequences.

- The "World Summit for Information Society" – WSIS – is one of the broadest platform for work on these issues.

The Role of Professional and Institutional Bodies in Developing Information and Knowledge Organization Ethics

- WSIS forum met in 2013, and issued a declaration on Ethics of information and knowledge societies which calls for value-based decisions and actions for the development of information, communication and knowledge.

- It is based on seven core values: equity, freedom, care and compassion, participation, sharing, sustainability and responsibility. These values are exemplified on nine core topics of the information society,

- Different WSIS forum met in two sessions in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005) and both of them aimed at promoting access to information and knowledge through new communications technologies and to tackle the global digital divide separating the northern hemisphere from the global South.

- At the same time it highlighted the ethical dimensions of the Information Society, and underlined the need for measures to safeguard cultural and linguistic diversity and identity, to avoid local content being overshadowed by vested global interests.

The Role of Information Technologies in Preserving Cultural Heritage

- The potential of digital technologies in safeguarding and preserving valuable assets have been established over time, predominantly in preserving our increasingly threatened heritage.

- Technological advancements in digitization and preservation aspects in the form of more sophisticated digitization gadgets have resulted in the practical implications of many digital preservation initiatives.

- We discusses the concept of cultural heritage and need of digital preservation as a urgent measure for protecting and promoting the Nile Valley Culture in Sudan

The Role of Information Technologies in Preserving Cultural Heritage: the Case of the Nile Valley

- **Outline**
  - We focus on the importance of incorporating technological advancements for managing effective and long-term cultural preservation projects In Northern Sudan
  - We point out the various challenges concerning digital preservation initiatives for cultural heritage including financial, technical, policy guidelines, legal and political concerns related to the political unrest in Sudan
  - We look at digital preservation of tangible heritage from the point of view of information ethics
  - We examine finally limitations and shortcomings

The Role of Information Technologies in Preserving Cultural Heritage: the Case of the Nile Valley

- Inventories are integral to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage because they can raise awareness about ICH and its importance for individual and collective identities. The process of inventorying ICH and making those inventories accessible to the public can also encourage creativity and self-respect in the communities and individuals where expressions and practices of intangible cultural heritage originate. On the other hand, Identification of specific elements of ICH in their own context and the digitization of those inventories consolidate their preservation.

- In the case of the Nile Valley Cultural heritage, we cans distinguish different types of objects, artifacts traditions, rituals that need to be preserved: noting that due to the facilitation of access to those ICH after the digitization of inventories , some of them became prone to illicit appropriation by neighbouring countries e.g. smoke sauna "Dukhan" where burned logs of Talih tree are used; "Dilka" (body scrub); "khomra" a special perfume

Typology of Cultural Artifact and a Survey of National Languages in Sudan

- Since Sudan ratified the 2003 Convention, The **National Council for Cultural Heritage and Promotion of National Languages** has been entrusted with creating a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Sudan.(UNESCO- Sudan Inventory).

- The preservation work required the development of the ICH National Strategy, therefore a National Team was established in December 2018.

- The development areas for the Sudanese ICH sub-sector are settled as:

- 1-Developing a safeguarding system

- 2-Inventorying and understanding the ICH of Sudan

- 3-Supporting ICH bearers

- 4-Promoting the ICH of Sudan

- Following are Examples from the Sudanese Intangible Cultural Heritage List identified by the UNESCO - Sudan National team where we distinguish different types of objects, artifacts traditions, rituals that need to be preserved.

Jirtiq

- the bridegroom's Jirtiq is a rite of passage mimicking a king's coronation ceremony of the ancient Sudanese civilization, an event that is retained in people's cultural collective memory
- Jirtiq refers to a set of rituals applied on the bride and bridegroom during their wedding ceremony, and to a lesser degree as part of the traditional practices in the circumcision of boys. It is also practiced in some other social settings such as at the seventh month of pregnancy
- Wedded couples and the circumcised boys usually start the rituals or end them by visiting the Nile holding date palm branches and singing certain songs glorifying the Nile to satisfy the river creatures and spirits; the groom visits the tombs of the saints in the region, asking for their blessing.
- The Jirtiq rituals take place during the wedding festivities where the bride and the bridegroom are seated on a traditional bed called Angreeb used in ancient kingdoms of Sudan. The angreeb in the Sudanese heritage is closely related to the sitting of the rulers, who are referred to as the owners of the angreeb in contrast to the owner of the taqruqa (the carpet) for religious sheikhs.
- In this historical heritage, it is called Anqreeb Al-Jirtiq, a (Atniba)which is a red-coloured mat woven from date palm fronds made for this occasion, is placed over it; in recent times it has become a red sheet or rug. This angreeb becomes the throne for the groom, after which the Jirtiq rites begin.

Aghāni al Banāt

- Aghāni al Banāt (Girls' Songs) refers to a specific genre of traditional songs performed by women It may be categorized according to the social occasions.

- The Jirtiq rite is accompanied by well-wishing songs such as al 'Adīl wa al Zain (the righteous and good). (UNESCO – Sudan inventory)

Jirtiq jewelry

- The craft of engraving on metals has been practiced in Sudan since the period of the Karma civilization 4000 years ago. Engraving of shapes and symbols on the surfaces of gold, silver, and copper are linked to customs and traditions (UNESCO- Sudan inventory). They have cultural connotations related to beliefs and rituals; for example, the pound ring worn by a woman for jirtiq and the golden crescent worn by the bridegroom and the circumcised child on their foreheads is worn for protection from evil spirits.

Jirtiq special ornaments

- A couple celebrating their Jirtiq wearing the Jirtiq attire: the golden head cover, the big earrings (fidwa), the pound ring for the bride ; the bridegroom wears Jabīira (a silver bracelet), Faraj Allah (a silver circular piece arranged with pearls), Harira (silk braided bracelets with a blue bead and a golden coin) Yusr rosary, Somite necklace and the golden crescent decorating his forehead band;

Jirtiq attire

- People take the young boys after undergoing circumcision to the Nile to celebrate their purification or their initiation to manhood. The boys are dressed in Jirtiq attire: the red forehead band with the golden cresent, the golden neklace and the silk braided bracelets with a blue bead and a golden coin

Birish – woven frond mat

- Birish industry is an old profession that may be traced back to the time of the ancient Sudanese kingdoms in Meroe and Alawa. The industry continued through the periods of Christianity and Islam, where the Birish was used in the rites of death and wedding. Palm frond products are exclusively crafted by women. The product reflects the local culture in its assorted forms and raw material as dictated by the environment. The desert inhabitants use the dom fronds while the riverine groups use date palm fronds. The products include prayer mats, event mats, different types and sizes of baskets, and Naṭu' (a special mat used for smoke sauna where a woman sits on the mat and covers her body in a thick wool blanket (Shamla) exposing her body to the smoke of burning Ṭaliḥ tree logs to smoothen her skin and acquire a pleasant fragrant odour). In general, Burūsh are used in the rites of passage. Every one of these mats is unique in its colour and weaving technique according to the specific ritual. the red mat made of date palm fronds placed on Angreeb al Jirtiq is specially woven for weddings;

Angreeb,Birish Al Jirtiq & Jirtiq Tray

(26) Al Misdār - Traditional poetry

- Al Misdār is a folk poetry created by male poets who belong to the nomadic pastoral groups that live in the semi-desert regions, in particular the Butāna of eastern Sudan (a region situated between Atbara River and the Blue Nile).

- It is an Arabic folk poetry that follows the pattern of the four-legged rajaz, which is similar to the ancient Arabic poems. This type of poetry has a specific form where each 4 lines have a certain rhyme.

- It is recited in the centre and the north of Sudan as well, usually telling a story or describing natural sceneries, hunting, cattle and animals on the move, young darlings, praising men courage during war, and so on. It usually refers to the nature around the poets sometimes comparing a person to some animals or a natural element or vice versa… in Butana, it is all about the arid area and it's animals, but in regions surrounding the Nile, the river and its creatures are quite present.

- In the following example we chose a Misdar Describing a strong brave person:

بحرا غريق لليله ما اتخبر عوامو   he is deep as the sea (Nile) no one has reached its bottom

- وحدرة عينه بتشق الجلد بعضامو   his eyes are fierce it slashes through your skin and bones

- اللي الفارغة ما خوجل لبس هدامه   he never participates in frivolous events

- خبطة كفه بتخم الوراء وقدامه   When he hits, he destroys

- The third ICH element that will be treated is the Nubian language which is one of the indigenous languages of the Nile Valley spoken by a large sector of the population of northern Sudan but that did not find its place yet on the Sudan ICH list despite the importance of languages as a vehicle of civilization. Taking into consideration that there are more than 75 languages in Sudan (a country that enjoys linguistic and cultural diversity requiring protection and recognition).

- The country comprises 3 language families from the four families found in Africa which are : Afroasiatic, Nilo-saharan, Congo-Kordofanian. The people of Sudan speaks about seventy to eighty languages. The North of Sudan is the poorest in linguistic diversity; dominated by Arabic and the 4 Nubian languages in the far north: Donglawia, Mahas, Sakkot, Fadija. The Old Nubian Language stands as the oldest recorded Nilo-saharan language (Abu Manga, A & Jahalla, Kamal, 2011).

The Nubian language

- The decorations on this Nubian door are on Sudan ICH list but not the Nubian language which is listed among the endangered languages (2022, Nubantood Khalil, Nubian Language Society (NLS)

A Short History of Meroitic (the ancestor of the modern Nubian language)

- Meroitic was the written language of the ancient civilization of Kush, located for centuries in what is now the Northern Sudan. (Török 1997; Lobban 2004) The word 'Meroitic' derives from the name of the city Meroë, which was located on the East bank of the Nile south of where the Atbara River flows off to the east. It is the second oldest written language in Africa after Egyptian hieroglyphs. It is a phonetic language with both a hieroglyph form using some adopted Egyptian hieroglyphs and a cursive form similar to Egyptian Demotic writing. The language had one innovation uncommon in ancient written languages such as Egyptian hieroglyphics or Greek in that there was a word separator, similar in function to spaces in modern scripts, that looks similar to a colon. Meroitic was employed starting the 2nd century BC and was continuously used until the fall of Meroë in the mid-4th century AD.

Meroitic		transcription		Meroitic		transcription	
demo	*hiero*	*Hintze*	*Rowan*	*demo*	*hiero*	*Hintze*	*Rowan*
ᔕ2	🦅	a–		⟋	✈	l(a)	
ᔕ	ß	e	*schwa*	▽	👁	ch(a)	
/	🐟	o	u	⹍	○	kh(a)	
✝	🧍	i		V//	‡	se	s
///	𝟿𝟿	y(a)		⹌	🏛	s(a)	s(e)
ƀ	𓃭	w(a)		⹎	🦅	k(a)	
ⱴ	🐏	b(a)		⑂	△	q(a)	
ⵟ	▦	p(a)		⸆	🔒	t(a)	t(e)
⹍	🦉	m(a)		/4	⊓	te	t
ⱪ	∿∿∿	n(a)	n(e)	⹂	◡	to	tu
ⵓ	⧻	ne	n	⹑	𓂀	d(a)	r(a)
ⱳ	⊟	r(a)	?	:	:	*word divider*	

Old Nubian script

The Old Nubian Script

- During the Christian Nubia (400 A.D. to 1320 A.D), the Nubians developed the Old Nubian Script using Coptic-Greek alphabets with some domestic modifications in both calligraphy and orthography and appeared in the ancient Christian scriptures, which conspicuously distinguished the Old Nubian corpus contents from other Coptic ones

(Browne, 2002)

OLD NUBIAN ALPHABET

ⲁ	a	ⲓ	i	ⲣ	r	ⳟ	sh
ⲃ	b	ⲕ	k	ⲥ	s	ⳣ	h
ⲅ	g	ⲗ	l	ⲧ	t	ⲇ	j (as Eng. judge)
ⲇ	d	ⲙ	m	ⲩ	u	ⳝ	ṅ (as Eng. singer)
ⲉ	e	ⲛ	n	ⲫ	ph	ⳡ	ñ (as Eng. onion)
ⲍ	z	ⳍ	x	ⲭ	ch (as Germ. Bach)	Ⳬ,ⲟⲩ	ou,w (as Eng. wish)
ⲏ	ê	ⲟ	o	ⲯ	ps		
ⲑ	th (as Eng. thin)	ⲡ	p	ⲱ	ô		

Old Nubian Alphabet. MediaWiki (contribs). [23 November 2010] available from Medieval Nubia Info
Website: http://www.medievalnubia.info/dev/index.php/File:Old_Nubian_alphabet_Eng.png

NUBIA, THE BIRTHPLACE OF HISTORICAL WRITING SYSTEMS

- The region Nubia had experienced writing for a long time ago.

- During the ancient Kingdoms of Kush, the Nubians used the hieroglyphic writing system.

- During the time of Meroe, the Nubians developed a consonant-based logographic (Abjad) writing system known as Meroitic script, which was prevalent in their ancient temples. The Meroitic Script is an alpha-syllabary or inherent-vowel (Abugida) script.

(Putman, 2008)

Omniglot, the online encyclopedia of writing systems and languages. (n.d.). Meroïtic alphabet. https://omniglot.com/writing/meroitic.htm

The Old Nubian Language

- Old Nubian, is the mother language of all the contemporary Nubian languages.

- Old Nubia was used as the official language of the Nubian Christian kingdoms and continued to be used as the official language of Nubia for at least 1200 years.

- Old Nubian is the only African language for which the grammar can be traced back to over a millennium (Browne 2002).

- Old Nubian is one of the rarest written African languages in the early times.
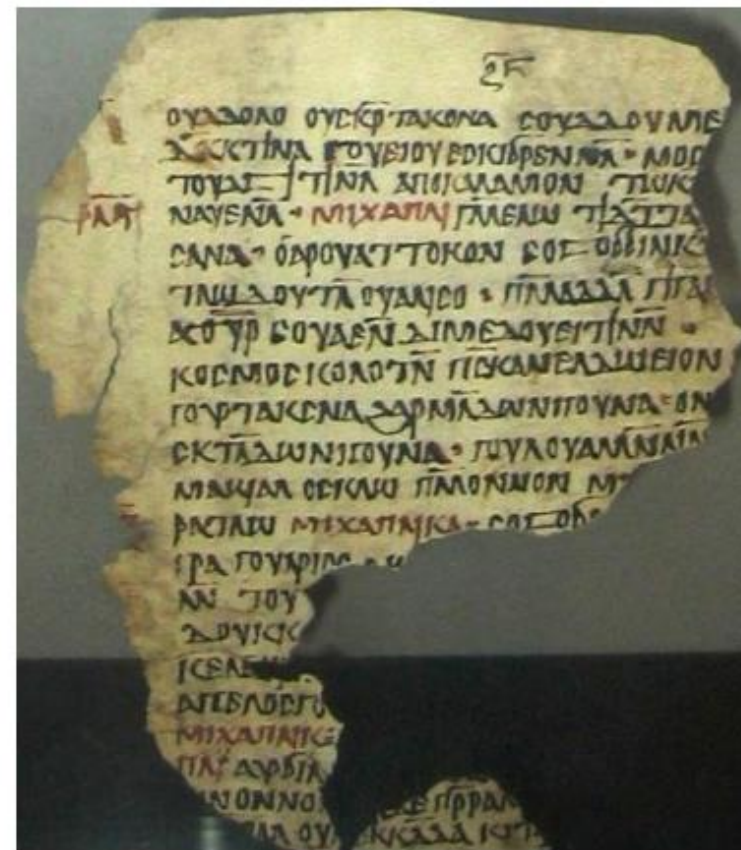
Old Nubian Text from Qasr Ibrim, taken from Nubia to the British Museum

Comparing Nobiin and meroitic languages

Nobiin and Meroitic

- Nobiin belongs to the Nilo-Saharan Phylum , and within the Nilo-Saharan phylum, it is included in a sub-group of languages with Meroitic known as Northern Eastern Sudanic (Claude Rill, 2009).

- The shown table demonstrates some lexical connection between Nobiin and Meroitic (Khalil, 2017).

- There also phonological symmetry between Nobiin and Meroitic. Nobiin has 24 sounds in its phonemic inventory compared to 23 sounds the Meroitic.

- Also, both languages do not have the two voiced fricatives [z] and [v].

Meroitic	Meaning in Meroitic	Nobiin	Meaning in Nobiin
ab/ap	father, ancestor	(fa)ab	father
ar	bring out	ar(ri)	bring (some one) something
d	give	d(een)	give
dm	receive, take	dumm/dimm	receive, take
sha	spirit body	sho(orti)	spirit
aɲ	spirit	(a)aɲ	to live, to keep the spirit of living
ine	tradition	un(d)ee	past
ato	water	hutti/utti	water, sea
nte	honor	inti	honor

The Meroitic List (Clyde Winters, 2000)

Modern Nubian language « Nobiin »

The Nobiin Translation works
NLS Sample work (Khalil, 2017)
Part of CAHIER D'UN RETOUR AU PAYS NATAL
By the Great Aimé Césaire

- NLS academic members published few literary translation from other languages to Nobiin.
- Literary translation permits literature to transcend the linguistic beauty, social values, and artistic creativities across the cultures and communities of the world.
- Accordingly, for many languages, literary translation is considered one of the vital processes that can hugely contribute to language development by delivering new ideas and injecting new spirits.

ⲞⲨⲢⲞⲨⲘⲔⲒⲗ ⲁⲛⲛⲓ,

ⲔⲒⲗ ⲘⲞⲨⲘⲞⲨⲢⲁⲓⲁⲘⲞⲨⲛⲁ

ⲞⲨⲄⲢⲈ̄ⲤⲒⲛ ⲅⲞⲨϬⲞ̄ⲩϬⲒⲗⲗⲞ

ⲦⲁⲢ ⲫⲁ ⲘⲁϣⲁⲔⲔⲁ Ϭⲁ̄ⲄⲘⲞⲨⲛⲛⲁ

ⲞⲨⲢⲞⲨⲘⲔⲒⲗ ⲁⲛⲛⲓ,

ⲁⲘⲁⲛ ⲚⲁⲢⲔⲈ ⲖⲁⲫⲫⲞⲔⲔⲁ ⲁⲗⲁⲄⲘⲞⲨⲛⲛⲁ

ⲞⲨⲢⲞⲨⲘⲔⲒⲗ ⲁⲛⲛⲓ,

ⲄⲞⲨⲢ ⲗⲓⲓ̈ⲞⲤⲒ ϫⲈ̄ⲗⲗⲁⲦⲟ̄ⲛⲘⲞⲨⲛⲁ

ⲁⲅⲟ̄ⲩⲛ ⲒⲢ Ⲟ̄ⲄϬⲒ ⲘⲁⲗⲗⲈ̄ⲔⲔⲁ

Ⲙⲁⲛ ⲤⲒⲛⲛⲓⲛ ⲔⲁϫⲁⲢⲦⲒⲄⲁ

Ⲓⲛ ⲤⲒⲢⲒ̈Ⲟ ⲖⲁϫϫⲓⲔⲔⲁ

ⲔⲒⲢ! ⲦⲁϬϬⲈ ⲁⲢⲓⲛ ⲔⲈ̄ⲗⲔⲁ

ⲦⲁⲢⲓⲛ ⲡⲁⲗⲡⲁⲗⲁ ⲤⲞⲨⲔⲔⲒⲔⲔⲁ

ma négritude

n'est pas une pierre,

sa surdité ruée,

contre la clameur du jour.

ma négritude

n'est pas une taie,

d'eau morte sur l'oeil

mort de la terre*.

ßvienne le colibri

vienne l'épervier

vienne le bris de l'horizon

vienne le cynocéphale

THANK
YOU

aï oyккaм ıскоïλıδıp

•merci