

Oral Narrative and the Archive: Their Significance in Historical Writings

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Abstract

The qualitative development of curricula must stem from the emerging transformations within society across various fields, particularly those closely connected to the very nature of such curricula, while also taking into account anticipated future changes within communities without neglecting the characteristics, levels, and educational stages of pupils. It must further arise from new perspectives on the different domains of curricular studies. Among the qualitative developments in history curricula is what some refer to as "Future History." Suppose that history, as the historian Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī notes, is an art that investigates events of time in terms of specification and chronology, with humanity and temporality as its subject matter. In that case, as 'Abd al-Ḥamīd al-Sayyid argues, history is not merely a record of past facts but also a way of thinking about human affairs. Civilisations since antiquity have paid attention to the archive, thereby recognising its importance in documenting trajectories at every level as both witnesses their achievements and a means of anticipating their future. The archive thus becomes a marker of their continuity. The greater the availability of documents, the more firmly historical truth is established, and doubts are dispelled. What was once merely a narrative becomes an indisputable historical fact once it has been subjected to scrutiny and verification.

Keywords

Oral narrative, archive, anthropology, folklore, transparency

Introduction

The importance of oral history and its use as a historical source appears to have grown in recent years, gaining increasing prominence within academic circles. What seems to have delayed the incorporation of oral heritage into the domain of history is that historians often regard this heritage with insufficient seriousness, considering it a form of popular art upon which reliance cannot be placed.

Histories are constituted through documents, which represent the remnants of the past and the deeds of earlier generations. They are the imprint of the thoughts and behaviours of those who preceded us. Without documents, there is no history, and even when such documents do exist, one must approach them with caution, applying a set of standards in both the processes of interpretation and verification.

1. Oral Narrative

Through our previous studies on the subject, particularly in national and international symposia,¹ within the scope of this paper, the matter of oral heritage should be addressed by focusing on three issues:

The first issue concerns the relationship between oral heritage and history.

¹ Ali Bouteria, "Oral Narrative and Historical Writings: Algerian History as a Model," National Symposium on Historical Studies in Algerian Universities: Reality and Prospects, University of Algiers 2, Algiers, 3–4 December 2014, pp. 5–9.

The second issue relates to the importance of oral sources.

The third issue pertains to the transformation of the oral narrative into written history, with brief examples drawn from the reality of oral heritage in the Arab world.

From this standpoint, one may recall the statements of others who have emphasised the importance of oral heritage, such as A. Feder, who affirms that “traditions ought to be accepted because they are worthy of trust.”² This, however, is not the only challenge I have faced in such research. I have encountered great difficulty in terms of terminology and the determination of meanings. I believe this stems from the ambiguity surrounding the field of oral heritage studies, for it is a discipline claimed by multiple fields, if the expression may be used and is in fact shared by history, sociology, anthropology, literature, and linguistics, among other human sciences. Even when it began to secure some independence under the designation “folklore,” its definition of terms and methodologies remained obscure.³

What Is the Relationship between Oral Heritage and History?

The abandonment of oral sources by historians left the field open to specialists in folklore and anthropology. This distancing caused such sources to lose much of their historical character, as those disciplines did not initially acknowledge the importance of history in the study of oral heritage until the early 1950s. The reason, as noted earlier, lies in the dominance of folklorists over oral sources, who often label them as myths and didactic legends. They regarded these narratives as bearing philosophical meaning and educational value more than carrying any historical details. Some even went so far as to declare that oral sources contained no historical facts whatsoever.⁴

Such views delayed the utilisation of oral heritage as one of the diverse sources of history. Nevertheless, it would not be an exaggeration to assert that oral heritage is closely connected to history because it serves as a mirror of the civilisational stage experienced by people. It reflects their thoughts and emotions; conveys significant aspects of prevailing economic, social, political, and cultural systems; and, according to some researchers, even constitutes the cradle in which written history was born.⁵

The components of oral history are the elements of popular heritage, such as tales, stories, popular biographies, proverbs, sayings, songs, and poetry. Given this, can historians afford to ignore oral heritage? The answer, I believe, is negative; oral traditions can reinforce confidence in certain historical aspects. However, some scholars hold the opposing view, arguing that oral heritage must be examined in light of written history, artefacts, or language.⁶

1-1. Importance of oral sources

Known and documented cultures were originally oral cultures. The Iliad and the Odyssey, along with other Greek works, were originally oral compositions, with Homer as the first oral historian whose works have come down to us in written form. Following him were Herodotus and Thucydides, who were the first to combine oral narratives with written history. Herodotus, in particular, undertook numerous journeys in Asia Minor and the Near East, collecting stories and tales about the histories of the lands he visited.⁷

In the early Christian era, oral narratives held a prominent position, as most Christians were illiterate. Thus, the oral narrative is evident in the books of the Bible, whose composition extended over seventy-five years. The same applies to the books of the Apocrypha.⁸ In medieval Europe, historians had little choice but to rely on oral narratives for their histories, predominantly depending on these narratives, their personal diaries, or eyewitness testimonies.

There is a consensus that most modern historians, chroniclers, writers, and early poets drew upon oral sources. Among the foremost early Muslim historians to rely extensively on oral narratives when

² Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, trans. Ḥasan al-Bannā ‘Izz al-Dīn, ‘Ālam al-Ma‘rifa series, vol. 182, Kuwait, 1994, pp. 290–291.

³ Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, trans. Aḥmad ‘Alī Mūsā, Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1981, p. 236.

⁴ The researcher is reluctant to adopt a comprehensive meaning of the word “folklore” as encompassing all popular heritage, since its meaning varies from one country to another. While the French use it to cover most aspects of popular heritage, the Russians construe it as intangible popular culture and reserve the term *ethnographie* for tangible popular heritage.

See on this distinction: Nabīl Jūrj Salāma, *Oral Heritage in the Near East and the Methodology of Its Preservation*, Damascus: Syrian Ministry of Culture, 1986, pp. 39–40.

⁵ Nabīl Salāma, *Oral Heritage*, p. 60.

⁶ Nabīl Salāma, *Oral Heritage*, p. 59.

⁷ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, and Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 35.

⁸ David Hanige, *Oral Historiography*, 1st ed., University of Texas, Austin, 1983, p. 20.

composing their works are Al-Baladhuri (d. 298 AH), Al-Tabari (d. 310 AH), Al-Masudi (d. 346 AH), and Ibn Khaldun (d. 808 AH). The entirety of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry is almost oral poetry that originated within a lyrical context.⁹

Credit is due to Muslim scholars who codify scientific rules for utilising oral narrations, which later evolved into independent disciplines such as the science of isnād (the chain of transmission), ‘ilm al-rijāl (the study of narrators), ‘ilm al-jarḥ wa-al-ta’dīl (criticism and accreditation), the terminology of ḥadīth, and many others.¹⁰ Despite this legacy, some contemporary historians still do not recognise oral sources. Mas‘ūd Dāhīr observes that this scepticism persists even in the face of numerous newly documented historical facts discovered during oral personal interviews.¹¹ Furthermore, historians’ neglect of oral heritage has ceded this field to specialists in anthropology and folklore, who often lack an interest in the past, which has resulted in much of the contemporary oral heritage literature being incomplete and unconvincing.

In the modern era, the utilisation of oral traditions in the field of history flourished in Europe from the twelfth century to the sixteenth century, resulting in historical works such as chronicles and writings on the histories of cities and ruling families. However, this movement declined during the nineteenth century. In America, interest in oral heritage continued due to its role as a nearly exclusive source for both indigenous populations and immigrants. By the twentieth century, attention to oral traditions in history had increased markedly. By the early 1960s, a strong scholarly movement emerged, led by Jan Vansina and other historians, anthropologists, and folklorists, who advocated for the acceptance of oral tradition as a legitimate historical source.¹²

Those who doubt the suitability of oral narratives as documents and sources for historical study may reconsider their position upon recalling that most written documents were originally orally transmitted narratives before being recorded. On this basis, oral documents are no less important than written documents are, and the latter do not surpass the former except for being subject to multiple methods of verification and immunity from forgery. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to establish similar controls to verify the authenticity of oral documents before their recording, whether through recording devices or transcription.¹³

Personal interviews, or what some refer to as “life history,” serve to record oral texts that reveal psychological and human dimensions inaccessible through written texts. In such cases, the historian experiences the historical events under study through partial participation or by hearing from those involved. The historian can engage in direct dialogue with participants, clarifying many aspects of the past. Moreover, the historian benefits directly from the general impression left by subsequent events on the individual who took part in, witnessed, or heard about the event from an eyewitness. This, in turn, helps regulate the scientific conclusions reached by the researcher and discover the true intentions of those who shaped specific events.¹⁴

Written sources represent merely an individual’s dialogue with their personal past. For this reason, exaggerating the role of the individual, regardless of their social status, is unwarranted, as is constructing broad generalisations on the basis solely of their opinions. Regardless of social standing, an individual cannot be viewed as the sole maker of a historical event but rather merely a participant in it.¹⁵

⁹ Ibid., p. 26.

¹⁰ W. Bauer, *Einführung in das Studium der Geschichte*, Tübingen, 1928, passim.

¹¹ Jan Vansina occupied a prominent position in the field of history and oral heritage, and his works have become essential references for numerous scholars in history, folklore, anthropology, and sociology. Terence Ranger stated, “Vansina was fundamental for all of us to the extent that if he had not existed, we would have had to invent him.” Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 45.

¹² David Heng, “Oral History,” translated by Milad al-Maqrahi, Centre for the Study of the Libyan Jihad, Translated Studies Series, no. 20, Tripoli, 1991, p. 24.

¹³ David Heng, *Oral History*, p. 26.

¹⁴ Hanige, *Oral Historiography*, p. 8.

¹⁵ On the theory of oral composition in pre-Islamic poetry, see James Monroe’s extensive article, translated by Faḍl al-‘Umarī and published as *The Oral Composition in Pre-Islamic Poetry*, Riyadh: Dār al-Aṣālāh for Culture, Publishing, and Media, 1407 AH, p. 14; also see Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab qabl al-Islām*, Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1978, vol. 8, p. 91.

Oral sources are a scientific necessity for understanding historical facts. In modern definitions, historical facts encompass all that predecessors have left behind, works, manuscripts, documents, recordings, customs, traditions, religious rituals, arts, folktales, inherited tools and instruments, etc.

The importance of oral heritage includes the following points:

Oral heritage may contain a degree of truth and authenticity.

It is impossible to precisely determine and evaluate the extent of truth within oral heritage.

Oral heritage cannot be solely relied upon in writing history.

All the factors affecting the credibility of oral heritage must be scrutinised.

Oral heritage must undergo rigorous scrutiny via strict historical methodology.¹⁶

Here, the following question may be posed: How can the oral narrative be transformed into written history?

As mentioned, the oral narrative is prone to alteration and change, and human memory is fallible. Memory may fail, events may be confused, or the narrator may show bias toward a particular faction, opinion, or belief. Therefore, the narrator must be studied carefully. It is appropriate to apply some of the methods used by ḥadīth scholars to evaluate narrators. Likewise, the historian should fulfil the role of a verifier who interrogates witnesses to arrive at the truth.¹⁷

Thus, the oral narrative constitutes historical knowledge when its content serves as evidence sought by the historian to explain occurrences or to support a particular viewpoint. In this sense, oral narratives become mere proofs, affirmations or refutations of a specific perspective.¹⁸

Historians have established numerous conditions for transforming the oral narrative into written history, a position justified by the fact that much oral heritage contains many contradictions with written history. Among these challenges is that most oral narratives present three significant cultural concepts: a lack of a clear sense of chronological order, unclear historical ideas, and an idealised view of the past. These issues collectively pose a major problem for research in oral history.

Historians, alongside some human sciences scholars, have conducted extensive studies to benefit from oral heritage. Jan Vansina was among the first to recognise this importance and produced an excellent study combining oral heritage with the rigorous methodologies of historians. Notably, he highlighted that oral traditions are free from any known forms of typology. However, despite the value of his work, he did not provide a comprehensive typology. To date, little research has addressed this critical issue, with the exception of David Heng's work in oral history, which offers preliminary steps rather than a complete typology for handling oral material.¹⁹

Consequently, historians must engage with multiple diverse patterns, a task that is both demanding and time-consuming.

The limited typology proposed by Vansina in his study of African oral narratives includes the following:

The formulas used include titles, slogans, didactic formulas, and religious formulas.

Poetry: This includes official poetry, public and private poetry, historical poetry, and poetry of praise and satire.

Lists: such as place names and personal names.

Tales: These include general, local, and family stories; myths; and personal memories.

Comments: Consider the narrative's context, whether it has precedents, and whether it is an explanatory narrative or relates to general or private events.

Vansina did not address the isnād (chain of transmission) and narrators in the same detailed way as Muslim scholars did.²⁰

The research process in the field of oral heritage consists of three successive stages:

The stage of collecting material from oral sources.

The subsequent stage is classifying, cataloguing, and depositing the collected material in an archive.

The final stage of the study and analysis.

¹⁶ Asad Rustum, *The Term History*, Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-ʿĀsriya, 1984, p. 1.

¹⁷ Mesaoud Dāhir, "Popular History and Official History: A Study on the Importance of Oral Sources," *Journal of Arab Thought*, Year 4, No. 27, May–June 1982, pp. 185–186.

¹⁸ Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, translated by Ḥasan al-Bannā 'Izz al-Dīn, 'Ālam al-Ma'rifa series, vol. 182, Kuwait, 1994.

¹⁹ Mesaoud Dāhir, "Popular History and Official History," p. 185.

²⁰ Milad al-Maqrāhi, "The Origin of Oral Narrative and Written Sources," Part One, *Qaryounis Scientific Journal*, Year 2, No. 4, Benghazi, 1989, p. 119.

The collection of oral material is conducted through three methods:

- a. Observation.
- b. Participation.
- c. Interviews.

Each of these methods has advantages and disadvantages, and combining them is advisable. This approach was adopted by the American scholars Milman Parry and Albert Lord, who developed Oral-Formulaic Theory, which is now considered one of the most advanced theories in scientific research related to oral heritage in terms of collection and handling.²¹

Upon reaching this stage, some argue for changing the term "oral narrative" to "oral history," which now constitutes a growing branch of the discipline of history. There are two types of oral historiography: oral history and oral tradition.

The former is a branch of historiography that since evolved into a scientific discipline. The latter serves as a source of history and encompasses oral traditions and culture transmitted orally from generation to generation rather than through writing. Popular heritage is part of culture, but not all popular heritage that is widespread is necessarily considered an oral narrative unless it is pervasive within society. For example, oral narratives consisting of memories related to the past do not become oral history unless they are recurrent and supported by some written history.

From this, it follows that the documentation and utilisation of oral heritage as a historical source are no longer matters of debate; their importance is well established. Several national scientific institutions in the Gulf Arab states have adopted this position, including the Centre for Popular Heritage of the Gulf States in Doha, the Zayed Centre for Heritage and History in Al Ain, the Centre for Research on History and Popular Heritage at the United Arab Emirates University, and the Oral History Unit at the King Abdulaziz Foundation in Riyadh.

As someone familiar with and involved in the project of documenting oral narratives in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I can confirm that the work is based on solid scientific foundations and is progressing steadily and successfully. More than 10,000 interviews were recorded. It is hoped that upon completion and publication, the project will clarify many points of disagreement or ambiguity in some aspects of the documented regional history. Another fundamental fact to keep in mind is that oral heritage and its preservation are vital for highlighting cultural specificity, a central issue in the lives of people. This fact has also been recognised by UNESCO since 1984, which, in its plan, emphasised the necessity of preserving the oral heritage of all kinds, viewing it as a driver of national development.

2. The Archive

This section will discuss the importance of the archive by defining it, reviewing its historical development, and concluding with its sections and significance for academic research.

2-1. Concept of the Archive

The term "archive" is of Latin origin: *archivum*, derived from the Greek word *arkhia*, which initially referred to documents related to the history of a family, person, or group. Over time, its meaning evolved to denote a collection of documents removed from current circulation and stored by an individual or institution in a specific location for reference and use as a source when needed.²²

The term "archive" functions both as a verb and a noun. As a verb, "to archive" means collecting and storing papers and files in an archive, with the past participle "archived" meaning the same. As a noun, it takes the form "archives." The Arabic equivalent of "archive" is the term *al-rabā'id*, which refers to the place where books, records, and minutes are stored for preservation.²³

²¹ Le Robert, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, under the entries "matière archives," "archiviste," and "archivistique," p. 116.

²² Al-Mu'jam al-Wasīṭ, compiled by the Arabic Language Academy, Department of Lexicography and Dictionaries, Maktabat al-Shurūq al-Duwaliyya, 2014, p. 46; Lisān al-'Arab, Muṣṭafā al-Duraysī, Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2007, Egypt, p. 17.

²³ Jean Favier, "Les Archives," in *Encyclopédie Universalis*, vol. 2, Paris, 1989, p. 86.

2-2. Concept of the Archive in Technical Terms

The archive is the collection of documents and records of various dates and forms produced by a public or private entity during the course of its activities.²⁴ Its purpose is to preserve these materials and to safeguard what concerns human history or the history of notable individuals, as their preservation provides primary sources, evidence, and testimonies regarding the history of countries and the origins of their peoples.²⁵ These elements contribute to historical documentation and academic research.²⁶

2-3. History of the Archive

The developments witnessed by ancient Eastern civilisations, as well as the Greeks and Romans, played a significant role in the emergence of various archives. This is evident from the clay and stone tablets and all the remnants left to us from these historical periods, whether they were found in temples or royal palaces. The Greek era was notable for the beginning of archive organisation, where records of laws were stored. Within less than a century, all the Latin record repositories were unified and consolidated in a single location, the temple dedicated to the worship of the goddess metron, known as the metron.²⁷

2-4. Sections and Types of Archives

The archive is divided into two main sections: the public archive and the private archive.

The first section consists of various documents produced or received by political parties, state bodies, local communities, and various public institutions and organisations. These are managed and processed according to legal and regulatory texts issued by the General Directorate of the National Archive, ensuring that no actions are taken with them outside the scope of the law.

The second section comprises various documents held by individuals, families, institutions, and nonpublic organisations.²⁸

The classification of archives into various categories primarily depends on the size and significance of the archival collections, the suitable locations for their preservation, the efficiency of archival management, and the precision of their organisation. It also relies on the number of staff employed, their educational level, and their expertise. Based on these factors, archives are classified into the following categories.²⁹

The archives are classified into several types, including: historical archives, judicial archives, literature and arts archives, political archives, administrative archives, military archives, archives of religious bodies and institutions, secret archives, archives of maps and atlases, and archives of seals, emblems, and coins. Access to and utilisation of these archives require approval from the authorities responsible for them, a standard practice observed in all international archives that play a significant role in historiography.

3-5. Importance of the Archive

The archive holds great importance in the lives of individuals and states, playing a vital role across scientific, economic, and cultural fields. It enables the anticipation of administrative and scientific matters, thereby forming evidentiary value. All administrative sectors place great importance on the archive, relying on it for management by using documents and records accumulated over time. These materials are compared and assessed both qualitatively and quantitatively to enable sound decision-making.³⁰

Archival documents initially possess practical and administrative value, but over time, this value transforms into historical significance for producing entities and the general public. These documents can be relied upon to conduct numerous studies and research that draw primary material from the archive. Through archives, economic and political conditions are studied, and customs, traditions, mentalities, and various daily aspects such as food, clothing, and housing are understood. Thus, the archive constitutes the raw material from which most historians, sociologists, ethnographers, economists, and linguists derive

²⁴ Salim 'Abd al-'Alūsī and Muḥammad Maḥjūb Kāmil, *The Archive: Its History, Types, and Administration*, 1st ed., Dār al-Ḥurriya li-l-Ṭibā'a, Baghdad, 1979, p. 43.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 109.

²⁷ Salim 'Abd al-'Alūsī, *The Archive: Its History, Types, and Administration*, p. 8.

²⁸ Muḥammad Būsallām, *The Archive in the Service of Scientific Research and Development*, Publications of the Council of Chefchaouen, 1999, p. 18.

²⁹ Salim 'Abd al-'Alūsī, *The Archive: Its History, Types, and Administration*, pp. 45–49.

³⁰ Salim 'Abd al-'Alūsī, *The Archive: Its History, Types, and Administration*, p. 109.

their primary sources to form an understanding of past realities. Its importance lies in carrying news and details of past life that hundreds of oral narratives cannot match.³¹

The archive reflects all the activities conducted by administrative bodies across their various functions. Through it, one can assess and monitor their achievements, successes, and failures.³² It serves as a reservoir of information related to diverse administrative activities, administrative methods, living standards, and social conditions of all societal groups. Researchers in multiple disciplines have utilised archives to conduct studies that have significantly impacted historical understanding.³³ Archives provide a vivid picture of lived realities in each historical period, each retaining its own distinct characteristics. This idea is eloquently expressed by Pierre Chaunu, who said, "Tell me the history you write, and I will tell you who you are."³⁴

Thus, research topics, historians' interests, methodologies, and study techniques will continue to evolve owing to the intrinsic connection between historical discourse and history itself, that is, the link between historical discourse and the problems faced by people and thinkers. This evolution also stems from the influence and interplay among various sciences and their scholars, leading to the emergence of interdisciplinary specialisations that combine history with other human sciences. Consequently, many new fields, such as historical demography, historical anthropology, and statistical history, have developed. Many researchers have conducted studies relying on documents, which Marc Bloch considered witnesses. However, a witness rarely speaks without interrogation, and for such interrogation to be effective, it must follow a structured questionnaire. In this way, history can be seen, according to Frédéric Mauro, as "the projection of social sciences into the past."³⁵

The archive is fundamental and must be accorded importance in the strategies of every individual, private or public institution, and administration. It serves as a testament to continuity, bearing witness to all political, economic, social, and cultural activities and reflecting the lived reality. As the historian Jāmi' Baydā, director of the Moroccan Archive, stated, the archive is the past, history, identity, heritage, and a symbol of transparency. It also contributes to the economic development of the country and guarantees the continuity of the state. Its organisation represents loyalty to the past, rational management of the present, and aspiration for the future. Jacques Derrida expressed this sentiment as follows: "The matter of the archive is not only related to the past; it is also a matter of the future a matter of hope, promise, and a sense of responsibility to build tomorrow."

Conclusion

In conclusion, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Histories cannot be dispensed with oral narratives and historical documents for writing true history.

The oral narrative complements the document.

Both are subject to scientific and methodological controls to ascertain historical truth.

The historian's writing differs from that of a journalist in its scientific methodology.

Historical documents hold great importance in preserving the fundamentals of the nation.

Arab and Islamic nations must pay attention to their archives, as there is significant neglect in collecting and caring for archives, particularly in Algeria, where archives are almost abandoned.

There is a call for the state and specialists to protect and attend to archives because of their historical, political, social, and cultural importance.

Efforts should be made to reclaim archival materials from France and Western countries, with strong negotiating positions to achieve this.

³¹ Muḥammad Būsallām, Centre for Documentation, Ma'allamat al-Maghrib, Sla Press, vol. 8, Morocco, pp. 17–26.

³² Muḥammad Būsallām, The Archive in the Service of Scientific Research and Development, p. 24.

³³ James B. Rhoads, "The Role of Administrative Archives and Current Document Management in National Information Systems," AMP, 1983, p. 1.

³⁴ Ernest Labrousse, *Esquisse du mouvement des prix et des revenus en France au 18e siècle*, Paris, Dalloz, 1933; *La crise de l'économie française à la fin de l'ancien régime et au début de la révolution*, Paris, P.U.F., 1944, p. 36. The translation of the manuscript excerpts related to "Oral Narrative and the Archive: Their Significance in Historical Writings" has been completed as requested in academic English with British spelling and Chicago Manual of Style adherence. If further translation or specific section requests are available, please provide the text or specify the required parts.

³⁵ Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*, Paris, A. Colin, 1949, p. 58.

Notes

- ‘Alī Boutra‘a, “Oral Narrative and Historical Writings (Algerian History as a Model),” First National Symposium: Historical Studies in Algerian Universities – Reality and Prospects, 3–4 December 2014, University of Algiers 2, Zouraiia, Algiers, pp. 5–9.
- Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, trans. Ḥasan al-Bannā ‘Izz al-Dīn, ‘Ālam al-Ma‘rifa series, no. 182, Kuwait, 1994, pp. 290–291.
- Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, trans. Aḥmad ‘Alī Mūsā, Cairo: Dār al-Thaqāfa li-l-Ṭibā‘a wa-al-Nashr, 1981, p. 236 (quoted).
- The researcher is reluctant to adopt a comprehensive meaning of the word “folklore” as encompassing all popular heritage, since its meaning varies from one country to another. While the French use it to cover most aspects of popular heritage, the Russians construe it as intangible popular culture and reserve the term *ethnographie* for tangible popular heritage. See: Nabīl Jūrj Salāma, *Oral Heritage in the Near East and the Methodology of Its Preservation*, Damascus: Syrian Ministry of Culture, 1986, pp. 39–40.
- Nabīl Salāma, *Oral Heritage*, p. 60.
- Nabīl Salāma, *Oral Heritage*, p. 59.
- Walter Ong’s book *Orality and Literacy* reflects his choice of terminology; see also Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 35.
- David Hanige, *Oral Historiography*, 1st ed., University of Texas, Austin, 1983, p. 20.
- Ibid.*, p. 26.
- W. Bauer, *Einführung in das Studium der Geschichte*, Tübingen, 1928, *passim*.
- Jan Vansina held a prominent position in the field of history and oral heritage, and his works became essential references for many scholars in history, folklore, anthropology, and sociology. Terence Ranger said, “Vansina was fundamental for all of us to the extent that if he had not existed, we would have had to invent him.” Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 45.
- David Heng, *Oral History*, trans. Milad al-Maqrāhi, Centre for the Study of the Libyan Jihad, Translated Studies Series No. 20, Tripoli, 1991, p. 24.
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- Hanige, *Oral Historiography*, p. 8.
- On the theory of oral composition in pre-Islamic poetry, see James Monroe’s extensive article, translated by Faḍl al-‘Umarī and published as *The Oral Composition in Pre-Islamic Poetry*, Riyadh: Dār al-Aṣālah for Culture, Publishing, and Media, 1407 AH, p. 14; also see Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab qabl al-Islām*, Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li-l-Malāyīn, 1978, vol. 8, p. 91.
- Asad Rustum, *The Term History*, Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-‘Āṣriya, 1984, p. 1.
- Mas‘ūd Dāhir, “Popular History and Official History: A Study on the Importance of Oral Sources,” *Journal of Arab Thought*, Year 4, No. 27, May–June 1982, pp. 185–186.
- Sayyid Ḥāmid Ḥarīz, *Methods of Heritage and Oral History among Arabs*, Abu Dhabi: United Arab Emirates University, College of Arts, 1992, pp. 4–6.
- Mas‘ūd Dāhir, *Popular History and Official History*, p. 185.
- Milad al-Maqrāhi, “The Origin of Oral Narrative and Written Sources,” Part One, *Qaryounis Scientific Journal*, Year 2, No. 4, Benghazi, 1989, p. 119.
- Le Robert, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, “matière archives,” “archiviste,” “archivistique,” p. 116.
- Al-Mu‘jam al-Wasīṭ, compiled by the Arabic Language Academy, Department of Lexicography and Dictionaries, Maktabat al-Shurūq al-Duwalīyya, 2014, p. 16; Lisān al-‘Arab, Muṣṭafā al-Duraysī, Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 2007, Egypt, p. 17.
- Jean Favier, “Les Archives,” in *Encyclopédie Universalis*, vol. 2, Paris, 1989, p. 86.
- Salim ‘Abd al-‘Alūsī and Muḥammad Maḥjūb Kāmil, *The Archive: Its History, Types, and Administration*, 1st ed., Dār al-Ḥurriya li-l-Ṭibā‘a, Baghdad, 1979, p. 43.
- Ibid.*, p. 100.
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