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ABSTRACT NO. 40

Preserving the Collective Memory of Swahili Culture on Lamu Island: A Documentation and Ethnographic Study"

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ABSTRACT

The paper is part of the Master of Arts (Fine Art project) titled "Depiction of Cultural Aspects of the Swahili of Lamu Island using a Combination of Natural Plant Pigments as Painting Media" from Kenyatta University. It argues that the collective memory of any culture plays a significant role in historic preservation, restoration, conservation, restitution, and documentation. The Swahili have unique cultural elements, including marriage, music, architecture, woodcrafts, textiles, boat construction, body decoration, dance, and poetry. Many scholars have attributed the decline of the Swahili culture to assimilation, extensive migration, and the removal of artifacts from their sites within Lamu Island. The paper establishes a collective memory of the Swahili culture of Lamu Island. The researchers conducted fieldwork by assessing Swahili culture from archived information at the Lamu Fort Museum. The researchers also utilized a non-probability purposive sampling technique by issuing questionnaires to key informants, including Lamu curators, residents, and Swahili experts. The data was analyzed quantitatively into thematic areas of the Swahili culture and interpreted by reflexivity. The paper has concluded by appreciating the collective memory of Swahili culture and noting the need for documentation in various initiatives.

Keywords:

Collective Memory, Swahili Culture, Disappearing, Lamu Island

