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Local Preservation of a Global Heritage, International Co-operation and the Digitization of Written and Non-Written Material at the University of Ghana, Legon

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Introduction

- Since the 16th century Africa and in particular today's Ghana has with an ever increasing speed become entrenched into a global network of intellectual, commercial and technological exchange
- Digitization of rare and hitherto unavailable documents on Dutch economic activities in the Gold Coast is executed by both the Balme Library and the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)
- A joint effort of Ghanaian and American teams from Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana and New York University's Audiovisual Preservation Exchange (APEX) under Making African Academic Resources Accessible or MAARA project

Institute of African Studies

- Set up in 1963
- Sought to encourage original research in all aspects of social and cultural studies and the arts in Africa and to disseminate these findings
- Six academic sections
- Five academic resource units





J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives

- Encompasses Institute of African Studies audiovisual heritage resources and paper assets

- **Mission**

To serve the needs of scholars, researchers and artists by collecting, preserving and disseminating audiovisual documentation of Ghana's unique cultural heritage

J. H. Kwabena Nketia Archives (Background)

- Core of the collection assembled by Nketia in 1952. (Basically sound recordings)
- The Collection formed the basis of the establishment of the Institute of African Studies
- Research expedition by fellows and researchers of the Institute increased the holdings.





Role of the Archive

- Promotes the educational and cultural role of the University of Ghana through the preservation and dissemination of Ghanaian music, dance and oral traditions
- Fulfills its mission by developing appropriate acquisitions of audio and video recordings of Ghanaian and African traditions as well as the diverse cultures of the world



J. H. Nketia Archives (Users)

The Archive serves a diverse community of users from the University and beyond; students and lecturers in performance studies, researchers in ethnomusicology and related disciplines, radio and TV producers etc.





Archive's collection

Audio	Video
¼ open reel	U-matics
LP	Betacam
78 rpm shellac	VHS
Micro-cassettes	S-VHS
Digital Audio tapes (DAT)	Hi-8/video 8
Audio cassettes	Mini-DV
Compact discs (CDs)	DVDS

- Rites of Passage: Birth, initiation and death rites
- Installation of Chiefs
- Festivals
- Folk/traditional music
- Occupational songs
- Oral traditions
- Interviews of prominent people
- Hi-life, religious and hiplife music etc



Notable Contents (Nketia Archives)



Click to play video



Access available handouts at ala.library.ala.org/sessions/handouts.



The Balme Library Heritage Collection



- Established in 1960
- The Main/Central Library of the University of Ghana
- Heritage objects are very diverse and so is their origin and contents
- Collection encompasses books and manuscripts from late 15th to mid 20th Century
- Furley Collection – Historical materials on the Gold Coast (Now Ghana)

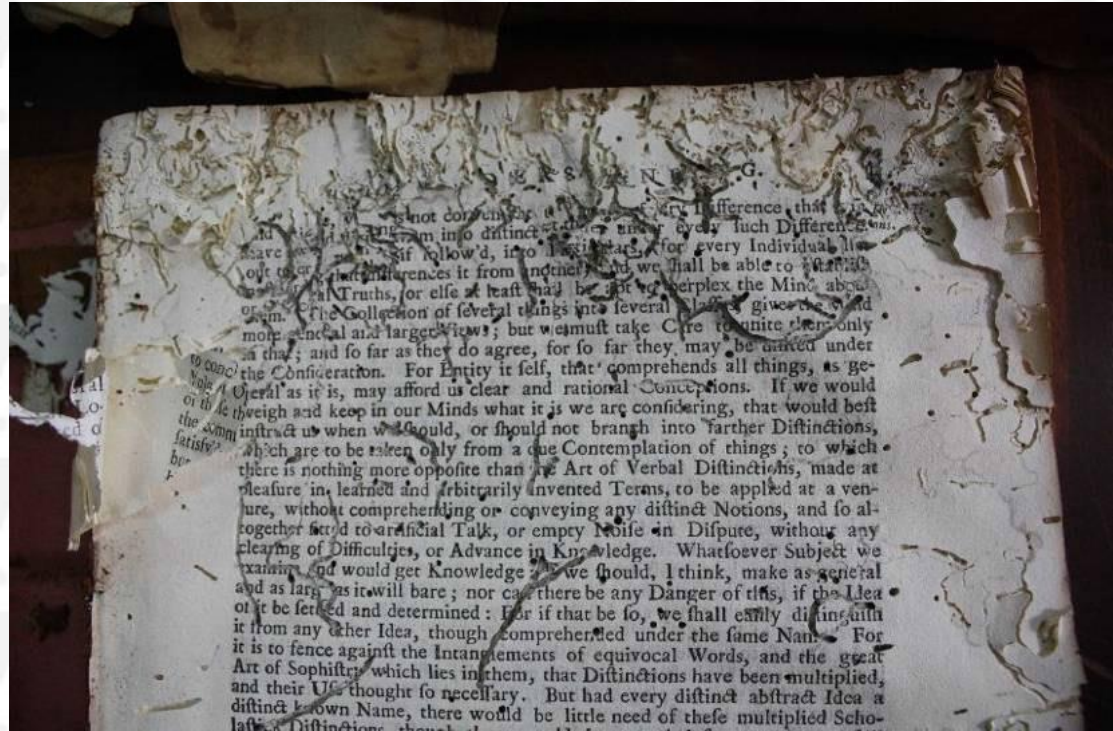
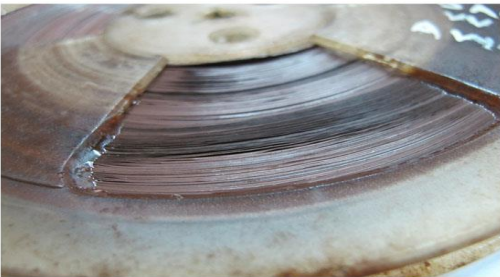


Collections

IP MOLD



PLASTIC MELTED



Damaged book (18th century)



Challenges

Nketia Archives

Audiovisuals

- Obsolescence
- Playback risks
- Acetate based tapes which deteriorate faster.
- Fluctuating temperatures in Media storage areas
- Climate effect visible on tapes
- Photo identification problems
- Funding problems

Balme Library Heritage Materials

- 20th century materials are in less optimal condition
- High prevalence of fungus infections
- Brittle Newsprint deteriorating and flaking
- Foxing marks or stains on both edges of the paper
- Funding issues

Intervention and International Cooperation

NYU (APEX)

- Collection assessment of all Audiovisual assets at University of Ghana (65 paged document produced)
- Concentration of efforts on Nketia Archives Audiovisual collection
- Assisting the Archive to have intellectual control of its holdings (IMAP database)
- MAARA Project: Setting up of a digitization laboratory, database modification, onsite training of staff.

Royal Tropical Institute (KIT)

- Stopping decay of heritage material at UG
- Improve storage conditions of heritage materials
- Inventorying and cataloguing of resources
- Set up a digital institutional repository
- Digitization and publication of heritage materials
- Digitization and publication of theses
- Fundraising
- Investigating the needs for restoring heritage materials
- Training of library staff in all mentioned fields of cooperation



Consultants from AV Preserve and NYU training staff



Setting up of Digitization Unit at the Balme Library in Collaboration with Royal Tropical Institute





Transformations that have occurred

- Collaboration with NYU/AV Preserve and KIT
- Institute Collection Assessment Report
- Archive refurbishment, Restoration and Climate Room setup
- Intellectual Control <http://iasarchive.ug.edu.gh:16000>
- UG Institutional Repository - <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>
- Digitization Project (MAARA) <http://www.apexghana.org>
- Capacity Building – *Staff training, Workshop, Seminars etc.*
- Preservation and Availability of materials Online
- Visibility and Improvement in University of Ghana ranking



Way forward

- Ingest digital files into the UG's Institutional Repository (IR) for wider access
- Map database (IMAP) unto UG Library Catalogue – Anticipating that MARC record will contain a link to the item in the IR.
- Digitize video assets through the same process as MAARA
- Expand the collection



Thank you for your attention!!!!