

The study of languages and cultural heritage.
An interdisciplinary project on traditional boatbuilding in South-Sulawesi in Indonesia.
Antonia Soriente
University of Naples L'Orientale

This paper reflects on the role a documentary linguist has in attempting to preserve the language and the knowledge of the rich heritage culture of a people. A collaboration project carried out by a interdisciplinary team of scholars, a maritime archaeologist, an anthropologist and a linguist in the District of Bulukumba, South Sulawesi titled Indonesian boatbuilding traditions, had the objective to record the process of re-construction of a traditional boat called *Palari*. The *palari* is a traditional boat with a 'pinisi' like system of sails that is considered endangered because is no longer built and has been replaced by bigger motorized boats. The audio and video recordings done during the process of construction by local boatbuilders had the objective to document the knowledge behind the boat construction itself, the rituals and the language used to describe the various steps of the articulated process of boat-building. The linguistic material produced a detailed thematic dictionary of maritime terminology in the local Konjo language with translations in the national language, Indonesian and in English. The project aimed therefore at safeguarding both the tangible heritage of the *palari* boat that is now sailing and becoming a living memory of the maritime people of South-Sulawesi, and the intangible heritage of the local language and culture.

Keywords: boatbuilding, tangible and intangible heritage, maritime terminology