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E. CERULLI'S FOLK-LITERATURE OF THE GALLA OF SOUTHERN
ABYSSINIA: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

A Thesis

Presented to

School of Graduate Studies

Addis Ababa University

In Partial Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Literature in English

by

Desalegn Seyum

June 11, 1985

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Approved by Board of Examiners:

Advisor

Examiner

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has four chapters. Its main purpose is to closely study and critically evaluate so as to analyse whether texts in Cerulli's Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia have cultural and historical significance to present-day Ethiopia. The process employed to achieve the objective of the thesis is as follows.

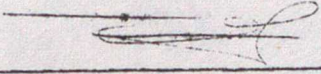
Chapter I presents brief notes to the statement of the problem, importance of the study, limitations and scope of the research, and phonemic notation. After a brief note on the Oromo, and on Loransiyos, Cerulli's informant, chapter II deals with the nature of the material in Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia. Chapter III is devoted to examining cultural and historical significance of Cerulli's collections to present-day Ethiopia. Since this chapter is mainly concerned with evaluating Cerulli's work from cultural and historical points of view, it comprises the core of the thesis.

Based on the discussion in the foregoing chapters within the limitations of this study, Chapter IV presents the conclusions thus bringing the thesis to an end with a brief discussion of Cerulli's pioneering contribution to the study of Oromo folk literature.

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my work and that all sources of material used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Desalegn Seyoum

Signature:  _____

Place: I.L.S. Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission: June 11 1985

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this thesis is to critically analyse Cerulli's Folk-Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia, (FLGSA*), and examine whether folk literature contents in the book under study have cultural and historical significance for present-day Ethiopia. The significance of the study lies in the contribution it makes to push the study of Oromo folk literature, which has been overlooked for a long time, a step forward.

This study does not intend to be an exhaustive treatment of all branches of Oromo folk literature: it is rather an attempt made to show how FLGSA can be used as a reflection or portrayal of Oromo culture and as a source of history.

Hence texts in FLGSA which deal, among other things, with beliefs as regards worshipping the Divinity, as well as with other social values such as bravery and killing are used in the study to examine the cultural significance of Cerulli's material. The texts dealing with such topics as the interminable intertribal wars among the Oromo themselves, the battle of Imbabo, and the Dervishes' advance into Ethiopia and its consequence are used to see whether FLGSA can be of historical importance to Ethiopia since the late nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the researcher would like to draw the attention of the readers to the fact that certain types of scholarly reports such

* For convenience this abbreviation will be used frequently throughout this study.

as an analysis of the works of some author require more quotations than others, as is the case with this thesis. The quotations used in this study are so carefully employed that they either convey information or substantiate a point or amplify a discussion by presenting the thinking of those who hold the same or differing views regarding the point being made¹.

Phonemic Notation

Oromo has twenty-four consonant phonemes. As gemination is a very important phonemic in Oromo, it is indicated by doubling the consonant phonemes in this study. For transcribing Oromo sample terms, I have adopted only seven of Cerulli's diacritic marks: \acute{p} , \acute{t} , \acute{d} , \acute{s} , \acute{c} , \acute{c} , \acute{n} . Oromo consonant phonemes are p, b, t, \acute{t} , d, \acute{d} , k, \acute{q} , g, f, s, \acute{s} , h, c, \acute{c} , j, n, n, m, l, r, w, y.

According to the above,²

c	substitutes	IPA	St
Y	substitutes	IPA	j.
j	substitutes	IPA	d_z
\acute{p}	voiceless, bilabial, ejective stop;		
	eg. qo \acute{p} pii - -		'preparation'
\acute{t}	voiceless, dental, ejective stop;		
	eg. tin \acute{t} noo -		'small'
\acute{c}	voiceless, palatal, ejective affricate;		
	eg. \acute{c} ubbuu -		'sin'



q voiceless, velar, ejective stop:

eg. hanqaaquu - 'egg'

d voiceless, dental, implosive stop;

eg. dadaa - 'butter'

n voiceless, palatal nasal;

eg. funnoo - 'rope'

Since each of the rest of the consonant segmental phonemes has a similarity with its corresponding English segmental phoneme, it is felt that there is no need of keeping on writing explanations like the one given, for instance, to p or t none of which is extant in English.

Oromo has five vowels and they are i, e, a, o, u. Asmarom Legesse notes that he has "no evidence indicating that vowel length has phonemic value in Gallinna³. However, besides the knowledge of the present writer⁴ that vowel length can be phonemic in Oromo, it has been a well-known fact for many years even by foreign scholars such as Tutschek⁵ that vowel length does have a phonemic value in many cases. In this thesis, vowel length is represented by the doubling of the vowels.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE MATERIAL IN FLGSA

As the object of Cerulli's study is the Oromo^{*}, it is reasonable to start this chapter with a brief note on this people, i.e., on the Oromo.

The Oromo are one of the major nationalities of Ethiopia who "belong to the stock community known as Hamitic(or as some prefer, Kushitic)...to which belong also the Somali, Afar or Danakil, and Saho"⁶. The exact number of the Oromo is not known yet, although some scholars estimate Oromo population to be about forty-three percent⁷ of the total population of Ethiopia. Knutsson even argues that "an estimation of the size of the Galla group as something to half or somewhat more than half of Ethiopia's population seems justified"⁸. This seems to be in agreement with what Bartels notes "among the many peoples living within the borders of present-day Ethiopia the Oromo constitute easily the most numerous"⁹ and with what Bender¹⁰ states that Oromo is a very widely spoken language in the areas extending from Wello in northern Ethiopia to northern Kenya in the south and from Wallagga in Western Ethiopia to Hararge in the east. "The Galla people probably comprise the largest single grouping in Africa"¹¹. Markakis, too, writes that

* Except in direct quotations or in books' titles, the word 'Galla' is not used in this thesis, for in Oromo view it has a pejorative meaning. Instead, 'Oromo' or 'the Oromo language' is employed to denote the language while 'the Oromo' or 'the Oromo people' is used to refer to the people speaking this language as mother tongue

the Galla who call themselves 'Oromo', constitute the largest ethnic group within the [Ethiopian] empire. Their historic migration, beginning in the sixteenth century, carried them from the lowlands of the Horn to the highlands of the plateau, where they settled. While the northern limits of the Galla reached the borders of Tigre on the eastern side of the plateau and in the west small numbers crossed the Abbay river into Gojjam, the bulk of the Galla occupied and settled territories south of the Abbay in the West and South of Christian Shoa in the center, including the southern part of Shoa itself. Among the Galla groups which settled within the territory of the Ethiopian state, ... the Raya, Yejju and Wollo occupied the eastern edge of the plateau as far as the southern districts of Tigre province¹².

It is this Ethiopian nationality, one of the country's major nationalities, that is studied in this thesis from cultural and historical points of view.

As regards Cerulli's source, we learn from the author's note below that it was almost from Loransiyos only that the oral source in FLGSA was collected. It is composed (11)* in the dialects of the Mačča Oromo. As there is no other better source which gives information on Loransiyos, I have quoted some notes of Cerulli on his 'unique' informant as follows:

Loransiyos Walda Iyasus, (14) born in the country of the Abbičču Galla... from him I have collected nearly all the texts in this volume. He is an old man, a reliable, valuable, and perhaps unique source of information concerning the Galla countries. He knows de visu places and personages; and during his adventurous life he has participated in the principal historical events of those countries... He was taken to Lieqa Nagamte and remained there during his youth. Soldier in the army of Dağgač Moroda, and afterwards of Dağgač Kumsa (son of Moroda), he fought in all the wars against the enemies of Lieqa Nagamte. Then he went to

* Please note that the numbers in brackets like this () in chapters II and III refer to the pages on which quoted or adapted phrases or sentences are to be found in FLGSA.

Lieqa Qiellem and entered the army of Dağgač Gote;...Loransiyos then enrolled himself in the army of Dağgač Haile Gudisa, brother of Ras Makonnen, and chief of the Nonno and Sulu Galla, he was afterwards chosen by the chief to accompany Qañazmač Abba Nabro on a great expedition led by the Qañazmač to hunt elephants. This expedition crossed all the countries beyond the Gibie, and advanced as far as the Galla around Lake Rudolph. Returning from his hunt, he quitted Dağgač Hayle, passed through the Šanqilla countries inhabited by the Berta to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and remained there a few months, fighting with the Egyptian soldiers against Ali Dinar, the Sultan of Darfur. Finally, he enlisted in the Italian colonial army and fought in Libya. He speaks the dialect of the Lieqa Galla (northeastern Mačča) and while he knows the Mačča dialects well, on account of the vicissitudes of his life, he remembers very little of the dialect of Shoa (Tulama Galla).

The fact that Loransiyos had made extensive travels in many Oromo regions, and worked under different Oromo 'motis' must have helped him to attain deep knowledge which enabled him to become a 'unique source of information'. Hence, Triulzi argues that one should "admire Loransiyos' extraordinary cross-cultural perspectiveness and memory, and Cerulli's scholarship in handling source material which would have been inevitably lost"¹³ were it not for his scholarly endeavors.

Indeed, one should appreciate Cerulli's admirable effort exerted in collecting motivating folk literature elements in FLGSA from Loransiyos. One should also note, however, the possible difficulties that could possibly arise from this very reliance of Cerulli on a single informant when collecting, transcribing, translating and interpreting folk literature texts of a people to whose culture and language the author (Cerulli) was foreign. Infact, we are aware of the fact that the social-intellectual environment of the time during

which Cerulli collected the material in FLGSA was not conducive for him to be able to be among the people whose folk literature he was collecting. Yet, according to modern methodology, it is logical to note that the student of folk literature has to accept the fact that his subject of study is largely the creative expression of a people, not a unique individual"¹⁴ because folk literature "exists in a social situation involving a number of people",¹⁵ and not necessarily in an individual. Fransis Lee Utley is aware of the same problem when he writes that a student of folk literature and art needs much exposure to ethnological background.¹⁶ Thus in order to understand the people and their culture, the need to be among them for a considerable time is beyond question. Hence, the study of the folk literature "of a culture cannot be carried out unless a thorough knowledge of the culture and of the language has previously been acquired."¹⁷ Vansina further goes on to stress that:

the first requirement is a knowledge of the language in which the information provided by traditions is conveyed, for without a knowledge of the language the meaning cannot be grasped. It is more or less impossible to collect traditions in a language other than that in which they have been transmitted... If the informant has to try to translate them into another language, he will not find it easy to express what he wants to say. Moreover, he will come up against special difficulties of translation, because the concepts he wants to express do not exist in the culture to which the language he is translating into belongs, or because he cannot find an equivalent for the subtle shades of meaning of his mother tongue in the foreign language. He therefore translates carelessly and inaccurately... In any case [the field worker] must produce the tradition in its original language, and this presupposes that a linguistic study of the language has already been made prior to the collection of traditions... Once he has become familiar with the language and

with the culture in general, his first task as field worker will be to find out what types of traditions exist in this culture and to analyse the characteristics of each type- what its purposes, functions, and psychological significance are,... what literary category it belongs to. Once he has collected all this information, he will know where to look for traditions. If he is not fully documented about them, he will be unable to proceed to the later stages of his work, for how can he collect his sources systematically if he does not know something about the object of his research ... The only hope of getting on to the right track is to enter into the life of the group one is studying and become acquainted with their daily routine over a long period.¹⁸

However, despite some weaknesses in FLGSA arising either from Cerulli's disability to be among the people whose folk literature he was studying, or perhaps from his informant's faulty memory in some cases, his work under study, in fact, remains a good repertoire of Oromo culture and a rich source of history, as is examined in Chapter III.

We will now have a brief look at the nature of the material in FLGSA.

As a whole, in FLGSA there are two major divisions. These are the song section and the prose section.

In the song section of his book, Cerulli begins with transcribing song texts on historical subjects in which (18) he states that there used to be constant clashes among what he calls 'the independent Galla states' such as Guma, Gomma and Limmu; about the conquest of the Galla kingdoms (70) by Emperor Menelik II, and (98) about the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1896; that is, the Battle of Adwa in which Ethiopian

forces led by Emperor Menilek II crushed the Italian invading forces. He then goes on (100) to record war and hunting songs, love (107) songs, nuptial (119) songs, cradle (124) songs, festive (127) and religious songs, and (147) pastoral songs.

In the prose section of FLGSA, Cerulli again records texts on historical subjects like the oral chronicle (148) of the Gumma kingdom, and (166) the holy war of Hassan Injamo, in which, according to Cerulli, Hassan converted all the Sulu and the Tulama Soddo to Islam; on the rites of initiation (167) in the Gada System, and the investiture (176) of the Abba Bokku, on blood price (181), on magic and prophetic (181) literature, on humorous (190) prose [Hassa], and (198) on riddles. In the appendix, Cerulli gives some description of a low caste of hunters (200) called the 'Watta', and finally he gives an index of Oromo (215) male proper names.

It may be observed, therefore, that Cerulli put an admirable effort in collecting song poems of various kinds with cultural and historical significance. In addition, in the prose section of FLGSA, besides other topics like proverbs and riddles, under such titles as 'Prose Works on Historical Subjects' and 'Texts of Magic and Prophetic Literature', seen related to the social environment of the time, an admirable attempt to produce a scholarly work was made by Cerulli, because until the time he published FLGSA, almost no literary work of this kind had been produced on the Oromo language: it was in FLGSA that the folk literature of the Oromo was "made accessible"¹⁹ to the

public for the first time. It can be said, therefore, that Cerulli has contributed not only to the preservation of considerable items of folk literature of the Oromo people, but also to the future literary development in the Oromo language, for folk literature usually gives a basis for the flourishing and advancement of written literature.

Regarding this point, Stith Thompson writes:

As the European Middle Ages lead into the Renaissance, the influence of folk literature on the work of writers increases in importance, so that, it is sometimes difficult to draw a sharp line of distinction between them.... Since classical times composers of written literature have borrowed tales and motifs from oral narratives, and their folk origin has been forgotten²⁰.

Similar points regarding the relation between folk literature and written literature have been made by many other scholars on folklore. For instance, Finnegan believes that there

is no basic incompatibility between written and oral forms, so there is no reason why a poet should try to keep his art free from the influence of oral modes nor why a local singer should refuse inspiration from a poem just because it happens to have been printed.²¹

As the above quotations exemplify the tremendous effect which folk literature has on modern written literature, Cerulli's collections in FLGSA will contribute to the development of written literature in Oromo in the future. Therefore, no reasonable student of literature discredits Cerulli of his scholarly endeavor that resulted in FLGSA, the first monumental work of its kind regarding folkloric studies of the Oromo. A comment may be made, however, on the portions of the

book which need rectification, especially as regards transcription and translation inaccuracies.

Cerulli notes that he had transcribed (15) the ...texts following the pronunciation of Loransiyos to indicate...the double consonants. However, the fact that many of the texts in FLGSA are not correctly transcribed is evident for instance, in many terms in which a number of consonant phonemes, where there is no gemination, are doubled to represent gemination. Unfortunately, though gemination can change the meaning of words in Oromo, the right consonant phonemes which should have been necessarily geminated correctly in the right words are not represented, i.e., they are not doubled, in such a way that they would be read with gemination, while, on the other hand, those consonant phonemes which should not have been geminated are doubled unnecessarily and wrongly in a number of words in which there is no gemination at all in Oromo.

Therefore we will have a brief look below, by some samples derived from the book under study, at some terms which are wrongly doubled to represent gemination where there is no gemination, especially in the syllables where these wrong, underlined consonant phonemes are doubled.

P.	S.	V.*	Wrongly transcribed phrases	Corrections
18	1	1	Gumabba dula mim <u>itta</u>	...mimmita...

* In this thesis, 'P.S.V.' stand for 'page numbers', song numbers, and verse numbers in FLGSA.

18	1	2	Oncho Jilcha mar <u>atta</u> da	...marrata da...
19	2	5	akkakayu habna	...akakayyu...
27	15	62	me si wamu takkar <u>re</u>	...takkare
34	18	12	yo dib <u>ben</u> nu dib <u>be</u>	vo diben nu dibe
41	23	4	jolle nam <u>atti</u>	...namati
41	23	14	hidanko sosck <u>ko</u>	...sossoko
42	23	90	isa sir <u>re</u> kesse	...sire...
42	23	93	kososon ċir <u>atte</u>	...cirate
42	23	103	akkakunkehafu	...akakunke...
42	23	104	manikengub <u>bata</u>	...ngubata
53	27	35	gangonnimbu <u>ttu</u>	gangonimbutu
60	31	45	jara nuf ha-d <u>issu</u>	...disu
61	31	79	buko cik <u>kille</u>	...cikile
79	47	23	simtar <u>re</u> muċa Jiloko	simtare...
83	49	28	Gobana qaba raj <u>ja</u>	...raja
94	56	38	yo sibill <u>a</u> haddisida	...sibila...
94	56	43	tisisa sir <u>resa</u> gofta	...sire...
103	73	14	jabbi bade barb <u>adda</u>	...barbada
106	77	2	gafarsa daball <u>a</u> đđu	...dabaladdu
107	81	4	...ke gara mo <u>ji</u> re	...mojire
122	121	122	sit <u>to</u> đabate	sito...
145	144	12	hagub <u>tu</u> Borana	hagubu...
147	147	517	Sir <u>re</u> dimbilala	Sire...
147	147	515	diddib <u>bisa</u> kottu	didibbisa...

Examples showing the omission of necessary Gemination in FLGSA.

P.	S.	V.	Wrong Transcription	Corrections
19	2	1	do <u>b</u> a Garbi Jilo	dobba...
19	2	3	gafgaf torba <u>j</u> ese	...torbajjese
19	2	12	ganda Ja <u>w</u> e Oncho	...Jawwe...
20	3	21	Hiri <u>y</u> an durba Ginjo	hiriyyan...
34	18	10	nuy <u>u</u> wama <u>d</u> inna	nuyyu...
36	21	22	bowan kan hi <u>y</u> essa	...hiyyessa
42	23	49	gade mal so <u>d</u> ata	...sodatta
42	23	53	qubi gurgur <u>a</u> ti	...gurguratti
42	23	65	hin <u>n</u> i sesambeku	...sessa...
42	23	95	bakar <u>a</u> tindofftu	bakarattindoftu
42	23	96	ilm <u>i</u> Ganna Sabu	...Sabbu
47	24	91	Way <u>e</u> ssan Kalloda	Wayyessan...
47	24	131	guy <u>a</u> lamanbul <u>t</u> a	guyya...
60	31	31	gurrachakka ay <u>a</u> na	...ayyana
60	31	49	Nagari fay <u>u</u> ma	...fayyuma
68	35	1	Kanduri dubb <u>i</u> balle <u>s</u> e	...ballese
79	47	27	gam <u>o</u> ji babbe façase	gammojji...
82	48	2	abbanke bi <u>y</u> o gote	...biyyo...
91	54	2	Arussi mal mala <u>t</u> etta	...malattetta
93	55	2	hagug <u>a</u> te nata sabasa be <u>l</u> ase	haguggate.. belasse

P.	S.	V.	Wrong Transcription	Collections
98	62	3	Ule dimtukall <u>ay</u> o	...qallayyo
104	75	1	Ob <u>o</u> gofte Tasamma	Obbo...
104	75	10	dara nat <u>g</u> ingilchi	...natti...
107	79	3	yo kutat <u>e</u> ben ya Berri	...kutatte...
108	81	1	Sula Sule Jilo ob <u>o</u> lesse sora	...Obbolesse
116	109	2	barchuma Shan kes <u>a</u>	...kessa
116	109	4	kue lafa tes <u>a</u>	...tessa
117	111	1	kan qalan dul <u>a</u> cha	...dullacha
118	114	14	fuldur <u>i</u> dulluma	fuldurri...
121	118-19	15	qarqa yab <u>a</u> ddu	...yabbaddu
122	121-2	3	anondab <u>a</u> anne	...ndabbanne
123	123	9	hod <u>i</u> ya mutako	hoddi...
125	126	4	ab <u>o</u> ro kate wad <u>i</u>	abborro...
125	126	5	bari kate dubbat <u>i</u>	...dubbatti
125	126	9	Wari natti deres <u>i</u>	...deressi
125	126	33	galatakemballes <u>u</u>	...mballessu
128	128	38	turte nama yadat <u>a</u>	...yadatta
129	129	2	arara way <u>a</u>	...wayya
130	130	1	dubartin Walaltud <u>a</u>	...Wallaltuda
131	132	1	dubbin Wakay <u>o</u> furdae	...Wakayyo...
146	145-6	2	...yo doq <u>e</u> ditan male	...dokke...
146	145-6	9	mofa namattuw <u>i</u> sa	...uwwisa

Thus, the doubling of consonant phonemes to represent gemination where no gemination is needed, and, on the contrary, the omission of the necessary gemination in words or phrases where gemination is compulsorily required shows that one of the major weaknesses in FLGSA is transcription inaccuracy.

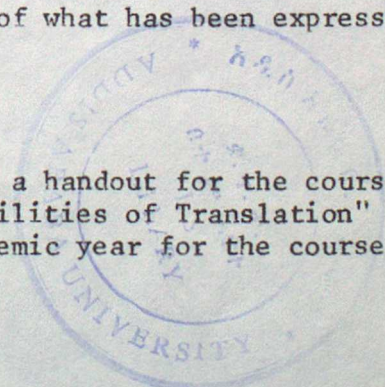
The other problem area that needs rectification is translation inaccuracy in FLGSA.

We learn from scholars that there is no absolute correspondence between languages because no two languages are identical.* Hence, because of cultural and linguistic distances, it is difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to translate everything that is expressed in an original or source language into another language since the two languages vary from each other in a number of ways.

Oromo is so remote a language from, for instance, Italian or English that translating Oromo texts, either poems or prose, into Italian or English, or into any other language which is very different from Oromo is a taxing job. This is not, however, to say that no Oromo poems can be translated into such languages as the ones noted above, for though it is impossible to produce an exact translation,** one can at least render the spirit and sense of what has been expressed in Oromo in the receptor language.

* E.A. Nida, "Principles of Correspondance" in a handout for the course 'Translation I', or Werner Winter, "Impossibilities of Translation" in a handout distributed in the 1981-82 academic year for the course 'Literary Translation'.

** From the same sources.



The English translations of many of the texts in FLGSA, though incorrect, have not totally deviated from their original meaning because in a number of the texts translated by Cerulli it can be clearly seen by a native Oromo that the English translations produce similar responses to the ones expressed in Oromo.

On the other hand, in so many instances, the translations are so inaccurate that almost the opposite of what has been contended in Oromo is written down in English. This is so, perhaps to a great extent, because of the fact

that the collection and interpretation of oral traditions is not a simple affair. Source hurdle is encountered in the first place in establishing the authentic text when there are several versions, in their being translated from one African language into another one, or from one African language into an European language, and finally in the proper interpretation of the expressions employed²².

Some of the English translation in FLGSA is negatively affected not only because of linguistic and cultural distances but also because of Cerulli's heavy reliance on one informant, Loransiyos Walda Iyasus who in a number of instances, dictated to Cerulli incorrect texts by substituting his own words for the original, authentic texts, thus violating the text and misleading the collector into transmitting almost nothing resembling the spirit of the original Oromo text.

This is the case, for instance, with the following text in which the authentic folkloric term 'kurkurtu' was replaced by 'gurgurtan' in FLGSA by Loransiyos. Just because of the alteration of this genuine

folkloric term, the whole spirit of the original text is almost entirely changed into something different.

The text with one of its key folkloric terms altered in verse eight is the following:

P.	S.	V.	Original Text	Translation
123	123	1	gogsinna jeđeetan	"Let us dry up" They say
		2	gogsu dađdabe	Drying up has been impossible
		3	gogsi ya aduuko	Dry up, O my sun
		4	šunkurta ballan kee ^{ne}	The onions have hidden their leaves
		5	obsinna jeđeetan	"Have patience " they say
		6	obsu dađdabe	Patience has been impossible
		7	Obsiya garaako	Have patience, O my heart
		8	gurgurtan jala geesse	The sold girl has been led down
		9	hođi ya mutaako	Stitch on my dodkin
		10	Si-ribuu qaba	You who have the rope
		11	Obsiyya garaako	Have patience, O, my heart
		12	siđugga qaba	You who have the right
		13	gugubanne maa tene	We have been assembled Why have we stopped

As to verse eight, Cerulli further tells us in a brief note (124) that 'Sold girl' meant she has been married to her lover after the payment of the bride-price. This is, however, the core where Cerulli's mistake lies in the attempt he made to analyse the text. The mistake was generated when 'gurgurtan', the wrong term whose meaning in English is "you (plural pronoun) sold" was substituted for the right, traditional term 'Kurkurtu' whose meaning in English is "the small girl". Accordingly, since Cerulli's understanding of the text's spirit was based on the meaning of the wrong word 'gurgurtan' and not on that of the correct term 'kurkurtu', he was forced to give us a wrong analysis of the text under question.

Contrary to what Cerulli tells us, what is expressed in verse eight is the fact that though the bride departed from her family and her relatives in marriage, since they still have the 'kurkurtu', i.e., the small girl who is the younger sister of the bride among themselves, they should look upon her as a substitute for her elder sister, and thus, they should console themselves. Hence, verse eight has nothing to do with such an idea as the "Sold girl" which is totally a foreign concept to the general spirit of the original text.

The substitution of 'gurgurtan' for 'kurkurtu' was, it is believed, the result of Loransiyos' forgetting the genuine term of the text. The somewhat similar sound pattern between 'kurkurtu' and 'gurgurtan' might have also forced Loransiyos to err here, and since faulty memory "can have a deteriorating effect on the plot"²³ of a

text of folk literature, Loransiyos's substitution of 'gurgurtan' for 'kurkurtu' has adversely affected Cerulli's translation and interpretation of the piece. That is why "the folklorist has to be on his guard against alteration and falsification in material that is ostensibly folklore.²⁴

Alluding to the impact of substitutions or alterations on the authentic folkloric materials, similar points have been made: hence, it is believed that

the continued existence of an item of an oral literature depends upon memory. As it passes from one person to another it suffers changes from forgetting or from conscious additions or substitutions. These may improve a song or damage it through the bungling of unskillful singers or tellers.²⁵

In his analysis of the above cited text (123), Cerulli summarizes the idea expressed from verse one to verse eight saying 'As the sun cannot dry up the leaves of the onion, which are already shrunk, so it is impossible for the bride's relatives to console themselves after the departure of the girl they love.' This is an incorrect analysis of the text at its best, this time not because of the alteration of the 'right' term 'kurkurtu' but, rather, because of the inclusion of unimportant words in his interpretation as if they were the genuine parts of the poem, as if they helped in conveying the sense and the spirit of the poem. In fact, verses one to four are introduced only to rhyme with verses five to eight: that is, verse one with verse five, verse two with verse six, verse three with verse seven, and verse four with verse eight. Hence, as it is common in Oromo poems, the first

four verses are put there just for the sake of rhyming, and not to magnify or to articulate the idea which is expressed in the text. Two of these verses which are wrongly included in his treatment of the text's interpretation are verse three, which reads as 'gogsi ya aduko', meaning 'please dry up my sun something', and verse four which reads as 'Sunkurta ballan keñe', meaning 'we stored the onions with their leaves' and not the onions have hidden their leaves as had been translated previously by Cerulli. These verses have nothing to do with verses seven and eight and with the idea conveyed by them. Cerulli, who was unaware of this fact contemplated that he should show logical connections between the preceding verses and the ones that follow them, perhaps forgetting that "The essence of folklore disappears with the development of contemplation."²⁶

Again in the analysis of another text (112) which reads

'Ya Gobie ya gobitti'
'harakie soda hamma yomitti'

and which is translated as

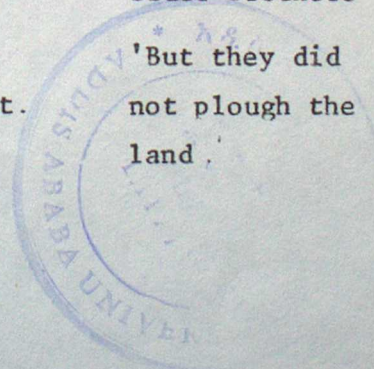
'O Gobana, O Coward '
'How long shall I fear your eyebrows '

Cerulli misses the gist of the idea expressed by the two verses. These verses are the beginning lines of a love song usually sung by the young male members of the Oromo to win the hearts of their would be girlfriends or lovers. No idea is expressed in the two verses which

refers to the cowardice of a man called Gobana at all, because in the first verse 'Gobie', which is the short form of 'Gobana', one of the Oromo proper nouns for men, is changed to 'gobitti' just to form a rhyming sound with the word at the end of the second verse, 'yomitti'. And in the second verse the idea expressed is 'How long should I be repulsed by your frowning look, always longing to see the smiling face of yours, i.e., ones would-be lover's face?', for smiling is naturally the sign of intimacy in love affairs.

On the following pages are cited some samples to show translation inaccuracies in FLCSA. All the Oromo sentences and their English translations under 'wrong translations' are derived from the book being studied in this thesis, and the relatively correct translation of each Oromo sentence is given in front of each of the wrong translated sentences by the writer of the thesis.

p.	S.	V.	Incorrect Translations	Corrections
27	15	15	dur obboko nunjedu Already called us 'my lord'	'In the past, they used to call us 'our elder brothers'
27	25	96	qotan qotannef malee but they dig and dig it.	'But they did not plough the land.'



P.	S.	V.	Incorrect Translations	Corrections
47	24	108	Nadden qotto bufte You (O Firrisa) have caused the axes to descend upon the women	'The women threw away the axes (in fear)'
60	31	10	nu-habasu dačče* Let us save the dacce	'Let the dačče save us'
60	31	45	jara nuf ha-dissu This, we will leave him	'Let him leave the men for our sake.'
72	39	5	jimmata dufu jirta Friday you had gone	'You are to come on Friday.'
72	39	6	robii dumu jirta Wednesday you had ceased (to dwell here)	'You are to be exterminated next Wednesday.'
78	45	3	Ato nañatta silayyu You know, (say) 'Woe to me'	'You would eat me, in fact
82	48	3	an abba biyaa gote I have made you lord of the country	'You made me lord of the country.'
103	71	2	Çirriqun durba Saala To spit on a girl is shameful	'It is shameful for a girl to spit.'
103	73	3	farda magaalambittu The horse of dark color is not bought	'I do not buy a brown horse'

*The dačče is the god of safety, according to the Oromo belief.

P.	S.	V.	Incorrect Translations	Corrections
103	73	4	kan boqa qabuidiisu He who has a horse with a white star on his forehead does not remove it	'I do not fail to buy the one, (i.e., the horse) which has a white star on its forehead.'
103	73	5	durba magaaalanfuudu The girl with a poor complexion has not married	'I do not marry a brown girl.'
103	73	6	kankarru qabduidiisu He who has a girl with fine teeth does not desert her	'I do not fail to marry the one (i.e., the girl) who has fine teeth.'
111	93	4	fuñan buttee gungumti malee One pulls her nose and she murmurs	'She simply murmurs.'
121	118-9	1	hinnaaḍuun Soba He does not eat: it is a lie	'Saying 'I don't eat' is a lie.'
122	121-2	3	anondaabanne Has not been placed for me	'I did not plant it for myself.'
122	121-2	4	sittoḍaabate It has been placed for you	'You planted it for yourself'
122	121-2	7	anonjaalanne He does not love me	'I did not like it.'

P.	S.	V.	Incorrect Translations	Corrections
122	121-2	8	sitto jaalatte He loves you	'You liked it.'
123	121-2	10	mananarsinii Do not perfume (your body) in the house	'Let there be no sign of smoke in your home (in your husband's absence).'
123	121-2	11	moqattuu taata (Otherwise) you will be a coquette	'Otherwise you will be regarded as the bad woman who cooks porridge for her own self (in her husband's absence).'
123	123	1	gogsinnaa jedetan, "Let us dry up "	'Though I attempted to dry up something.'
123	123	2	gogsuu daddabe Drying up has been impossible	'I could not dry it up.'
123	123	5	obsinnaa jedetan, "Have patience " they say	'Though I attempted to have patience
123	123	6	Obsuu Daddabe Patience has been impossible	'I could not have patience.'
125	126	29	kennaatu namaa kenna O giver who gives to the people	'It is the Giver who gives to the people.'
125	126	30	waqtu nama guddisa O God, make me grow	'It is God who makes people grow.'

P.	S.	V.	Incorrect Translations	Corrections
133	133	34	waqarre nu kaddu, Maryame We will pray to God, O Mary!	'O St. Mary Let you pray to God for us.'
142	142	25	kanakkake gurra gurguddatu Who had ears longer than the ears of thy grandmother	'Who had as big ears as those of yours.'

We see from the samples given in this chapter that Cerulli, as a foreign scholar on whom cultural and linguistic distances have much impact, made some incorrect translations on which his interpretation and analyses are based; this shows that in FLGSA translation, interpretation and analysis inaccuracies constitute an area of weakness. This is pointed out here only with a genuine intention of citing the portions of the book which should be improved by means of corrections made perhaps by some researchers in the future; it is not to deny Cerulli's merit of being the first scholar in Oromo folk literature studies, for the material in FLGSA helps much toward understanding, among other things, the culture, and to a considerable extent, the history of the Oromo: the investigation of FLGSA as a cultural and historical repertoire is the subject of the two sections of the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF FLGSA

Section 1. FLGSA as Reflection of Oromo Culture.

Some words are difficult to define. One of such words is 'Culture'. I.M. Lewis defines it

the sum of learned knowledge and skills including religion and language that distinguishes one community from another, and which, subject to the vagaries of innovation and change, passes on in a recognizable form from generation to generation²⁷.

Bantock also writes that the word 'Culture'

is used by anthropologists to refer to the total pattern of a society's life. The ways in which men cooperate or conflict, their social and political institutions, their taboos, rituals, and ceremonies, their ways of bringing up the young, their shames and crimes, all are regarded as equally manifestations of the culture, trivial or profound.²⁸

Oromo is a very important nationality whose rich spiritual and material culture deserves thorough studies. We will now, therefore, briefly pay attention first to some major examples of Oromo spiritual culture as is reflected in FLGSA in the following discussion.

There are several means by which one may come to know a people's culture. Since beliefs embody various social features, they throw much light on the culture of society. It is in this context that an attempt is made in this section to show how Cerulli's collections can portray Oromo culture.

Regarding Oromo conception of the Universe, which is also articulated by Cerulli in FLGSA, Knutsson writes:

According to Mecha world view, the world is divided into two types of qualities of reality: one human and the other more than human... The Mecha terms for these two spheres of reality are 'wan nama' and 'wan waqa' - the things which belong to man, and the things which belong to heaven ... A guardian divinity of the family is called 'ayana' abba', the father's 'ayana'; there is also 'ayana hada', the mother's 'ayana', identical with the female 'Atete' Maram²⁹.

Accordingly, reference to 'Waga' (God) is frequent, for instance, in the prayer texts of FLGSA where (136) Cerulli notes that prayer places man in contact with the Divinity. Here are (138-139) some examples in FLGSA.

ijarte nu ndigin, ya Waq - 'Thou hast raised us up, do not cast us down, O God!'

Kabde nu nbuqqisin, ya Waq - 'Thou hast covered us with grass, do not destroy us, O God!'

ija bo'u nu olči, ya Waq - 'From weeping of the eyes, deliver us, O, God!'

gara na'u nu Olči, ya Waq - 'From grief of heart, deliver us, O God!'

gargar ba'u nu Olči, ya Waq - 'From being separated from one another, deliver us, O God!'

nu dabika, ya Rabbi - 'Plant us, O God!'

jarsa Waqayyo dagai - 'Listen to the old men (i.e., to their prayer) O God!'

jarti Waqayyo dagai - 'Listen to the old women, O God!'

si ggurra qaba	- 'It is you who have the ears.'
jarsa Waqayyo argi	- 'Look after the old men, O God!'
jarti Waqayyo argi	- 'Look after the old women, O God!'
si'ija qaba	- 'It is you who have the eyes.'
ḍaga'i Waqayvo	- 'Listen, O God!'
Waqayyo ḍaga'i	- 'O God, Listen!'

Hence, Waqa, "the supreme being... is the creator of all things and the source of all life... Waqa has appointed to every being its own place in a cosmic order of which he is also a guardian."³⁰

Although Waqa is the supreme being and guardian, he has also created the 'ayana' which is a kind of Waqa's assistant divinity or spirit which comes "down to people Waqa has created...but Waqa rules over the 'ayana'"³¹. According to the Oromo belief, the

ayana knows of the deeds and misdeeds of men and has the power to punish men for their crimes against 'ḍuga' (truth) even after several generations. It can also advise men in new and unknown situations. It can tell them how to avoid difficulties or show them a way out.³²

It was in this context that Moroda Bakare of Leqa Nagamte, in his song of defiance against his bitter enemy named Tuččo Danno of Leqa Horda, says the following in FLGSA.

P.	S.	V.	
57	29	13	arfasan yogga barite - 'when autumn breaks forth'
		14	Abba Čaffe wamaḍinna - 'I will call on my Abba Čaffe.'

P.	S.	V.		
57	29	15	atis ayanake Jijo Baččo Kadaditta	- 'You (Tuččo Danno) will pray to your 'ayana' through (the soothsayer) Jijo Baččo'.
		16	Torban lamattu wal agarra	- 'We will meet within two weeks'.
		17	du'a sodatani nafani	- 'Those who fear death cannot escape from it'.

Thus, in verses 14 and 15, Moroda suggests that it will be advisable to consult their respective 'ayana' before the two warriors, that is, Moroda himself and Tuččo, confront each other when autumn breaks forth. Abba Čaffe and Jijo Baččo are the diviners through whom Moroda's and Tuččo's 'ayana' are consulted respectively.

It is true that in the Oromo society that 'ayana' is consulted by means of a diviner on various occasions. For instance, 'ayana' is consulted before setting out for a journey, when someone has a problem, before marriage, before starting a new farm.

Furthermore, there is 'Maram' or 'Atete' which "is the divinity of motherhood. She is invoked and addressed in songs by the women at any birth ritual."³³

Since the possession of many children is one of the social values that are esteemed highly in Oromo society, the feast of 'Atete' or

'Maram' (127), the goddess of fecundity, is among the greatest holidays of the Oromo.

In the songs sung (127) during this feast, Atete is also called 'ayo' - 'the mother' -, often with the diminutive 'ayole' - the dear mother. The following is one of the numerous song texts in FLGSA which exemplify this.

P.	S.	V.		
128	128	7	Kan masentittin horte	- 'That which the sterile woman has hoarded;
		8	Kan desse lakkawatte	- the fertile woman has gained
		14	ya dabdu ana n̄atu	- 'O she who has no children, woe to her!'
		15	uifofteguma n̄anne	- 'As she has never been pregnant, she has got no present.'
		16	desse gumata ndugne	- As she has never given birth to any children, she has not 'drunk' any present.'
		19	dabdun da'a niibbine	- 'The sterile woman has not hated to give birth to children.'
		20	Maramtu wal Čalčise	- 'Maram has been against her'.
		21	Ya dessu wallu Kobe	- 'O she who has children has beautiful dresses'.
		22	ayanni boro gomfe	- 'ayana adorned her room!'

P.	S.	V.		
128	128	23	ya dabdu wallu moso	'She who has no children has dirty dresses'.
		24	ayanni boro sokke	'ayana has flown away from her room'.
		31	Kan Maram nama gotu	'What Maram does for mankind'.
		32	hatofi nama ngotu	'even one's mother cannot do
		33	sibila muta gote	'She made nail from iron'.
		34	Kan diga muca gote	'She created child from blood'.
		36	bodin saddetama, Marame	'Eighty pieces of salt, O Marame'.
		37	Maramifan galce	'To Marame, I have made an offering'.
		38	arar, Marame	'Be propitious, O Maram'.
		54	erga Waqa gudda, Marame	'The message of the Supreme Waq'.
		55	Maramtu adema	'It is Maram who carries'.
		56	arar, Marame	'Be propitious, O Marame'.
134	133	83	namni Maram Kade, Marame	'He who prays to Marame', O Marame'
		84	oqurratti nargu, Marame	'evil does not find him, O Marame'
		85	ebon inwaranu Marame	'the lances do not smite him, O Marame'
		87	arar ya gifti, Marame	'Be propitious, O Marame'

P.	S.	V.		
134	133	91	Maram ya yole, Marame	'Maram, O dear mother, O Marame'.
		92	arbawon takalta, Maram	'Thou bindest the elephants, O Marame'.
		93	nenças ingadita, Marame	'Thou bindest the paws of lions, O Marame'.
		94	motis inajefta, Marame	'Thou killest the kings, O Marame'.
		96	arar, ya Marame, Marame	'Be propitious, O Marame
		102	arar, ya yole	'Be propitious, O dear Mother'.
		103	arar, ya gifti	'Be propitious, O Lady

In this song text about Maram, verses 7-8 mean that the children of the fertile wife will be heirs (129) to the wealth of the sterile wife of the same man. Verse 15 refers to the gifts which are presented (to the pregnant woman) during pregnancy. Verse 16 alludes to the Oromo custom that the husband's relatives give to the confined wife special presents called 'gumata' - which are usually pot of milk and hydromel. Verses 36-37 refer to the votive gifts or offerings given to Maram. Verses 54-55 state that it is Maram who carries messages from and to the supreme God. As a whole in verses 7-24 fecundity or fertility in women is extolled whereas(128) sterility and the woes caused by it are lamented. Verses 83-87 refer to the protective role of Maram while verses 91-95 testify to the Oromo belief that Maram

has got control not only of ordinary people but also even of the wild animals and the kings.

However, "in spite of this appearance of multiplicity [ayana, Atete or Maram] each one is also seen ultimately as a manifestation of the one Divinity. This view of the world is expressed in a wealth of rituals,"³⁴ the purpose of which is to transcend the boundary between the **superhuman** world and the human world and "thereby establish channels of communication through which the **superhuman** power can flow into the human world."³⁵ Hence, we can see that in Oromo society contact between man and God is made by a number of means, by daily prayers, by 'Waqas' agents or assistants like 'ayana' and 'atete' which are invoked and consulted during appropriate times, and by rituals.

The other social feature that is reflected in FLGSA, and which is highly esteemed among the Oromo is bravery, especially as related to killing. Accordingly the Oromo like their children to become brave or valorous, gallant warriors. This cultural determination is expressed, for instance, by the names the Oromo give their male children such as:

Abboomaa	-	'the dictator'
Bakakkoo	-	'the thunder'
Butaa	--	'the snatcher' (by force)
Daccaasaa	-	'the chaser or curtaylor of the enemy'
Deekkamaa	-	'the punisher'
Doorsisaa	-	'the tormentor'
Dutaa or Ćaraanaa	-	'the furious'

Duulaa	-	'the warrior'
Eeboo	-	'the spear'
Fullaas	-	'the piercer'
Gaamfuree	-	'the brave'
Jawwee	-	'the python'
Jigsaa or Ciibsaa	-	'the feller (of the enemy)'
Leençoo	-	'the lion'
Leenjisa	-	'the whipper'
Mo'aa	-	'the victorious; the ruler'
Mootii	-	'the king'
Qeerransoo	-	'the leopard'
Roorrisaa	-	'the torturer; the mutilater'
Tullu	-	'the mountain; the unshakable'

Thus, even from the above cited male proper names of the Oromo, one can infer that generally courage is one of the cultural features which is highly valued among the Oromo. Therefore, the 'honour of a man is bound up with having killed either enemies or big game... A woman is also respected when she is the mother of a killer.'³⁶ Accordingly, the greatest proof of manliness in Oromo society is to prove oneself a fearless fighter either in battles against enemies or in big game hunts. Jaenen also notes that the "Galla, long famous as cruel warriors...were correctly described by the sixteenth century [Ethiopian] monk Bahray as 'born fighters.'³⁷ In fact, what "makes the Gallas much feared is that they go to war and into battle determined and firmly resolved to conquer or die."³⁸ Thus since valour is an ingrained cultural trait among the Oromo,

one of the things women have always despised most in men is cowardice. In spite of the fact that during the last decades new values have sprung up, words such as "you are like me (you are a woman, you did not kill)" are still a common challenge in quarrels between women and men, girls and boys.³⁹

Consequently, at least according to the traditional Oromo society, a man who did not prove his physical courage either in battle or in hunting and killing big game was not regarded as a full member of the community; he did not even have the right to marry unless he killed, for example, a lion or a man and cut off the victim's genitals to present it to his betrothed.⁴⁰ Killing enemies and wild beasts are one of Oromo cultural practices in which he can qualify for honorific decorations and an appreciative wife.⁴¹

On such social occasions as the 'butta' (141), one of the greatest Oromo festivals which was celebrated every eight years, the account was given of the victories obtained by the warriors of the tribe in wars and hunts. This custom, that is, the fact that bravery or killing is of a highly esteemed social value to the Oromo is well expressed in numerous texts in FLGSA among which the following is cited as an example. The verses are from a song text in which a pagan Oromo war leader called Tokkon darse was extolled when he overran and defeated the Muslim state of Gumma in the late nineteenth century in the usual intertribal clashes.

P.	S.	V.		
42	23	33	Kan Tokkon nu gode	- 'What Tokko has done for us,'

P.	S.	V.		
42	23	35	sindinqu ya Guma	- 'do you not wonder, O Guma?'
		36	kuḍa šan qabate	- 'Fifteen soldiers he took prisoner.'
		37	Saḡaltama mure	- 'ninety soldiers he stabbed.'
		38	refan tao base	- 'with the corpses he fertilized the land.'
		40	baqollo fačase	- '[on which] he reaped the maize.'
		65	hinni sessa mbeku	- 'He (i.e., Tokkon darse) does not know flight!'
		71	korma si erginan	- 'When a bull was sent for you.'
		72	ani ṁṁaḍdu jette	- 'You said "I will not eat it,!"'
		73	Korma nama male	- 'except male (sons) of men'
		74	diga nama male	- 'except the blood of men!'

A society's culture has often got two aspects: these are spiritual and material. The following items which show Oromo material culture come out clearly in FLGSA.

Livestock: the Oromo have cattle, (89) 'lon': horses, (25) 'farden': mules, 'gangoli': (83) and donkeys, 'harrota or harre'. They also keep chickens, (41) 'handanqo'.

Housing: constant reference is made to houses in FLGSA, though not enough explanation is given on the shape they have or the way they

are constructed. Huntingford has the following note:

There are three main types of hut among the Galla... The general method of construction employed in all huts is a circular wall of thin poles or withies stuck in the ground, held together by horizontal cross-withies tied to the uprights, and the whole plastered inside with mud or mud and cow-dug. The roof is thatched and supported by a center-post. Calves and sometimes even cows and other stock sleep in the separate compartment of the hut. People sleep in the inner room, unmarried men and girls separated by a partition.⁴²

Furniture: this includes such items as cooking clay pots, (116) 'tuwwe'; milk-pot, (124) 'qabee'; big clay-pots in which women draw water, (79) 'Okkote'; and the pot of Osier for curds, (125) 'Okole'; leather bag, (79) 'qarbata'; wooden chairs, (42) 'barçuma': Stools, (116) 'dombi'; ordinary wooden bed, (94) 'sire'; a very big spear, (84) 'bakara'; ordinary spears, (115) 'ebo'; axe, (53) 'qotto'; Shields, (117) 'gaččana'; saddle, (68) 'kora'; Knives, (53) 'billa or qaraba'; dresses made of cotton such as a kind of the toga, (86) 'waya'; the girde, (107) 'sabbata'; and leather dress called (98) 'gurda' both of which were worn by both sexes: the 'gurda' is (31)...wound round the body and is believed by the Oromo to have been the best remedy against the evil-eye.

Farm products: from among the many kinds of crops, (102) 'miđan', grown by the Oromo, the following come out in FLGSA. barley, (66) 'garbu'; maize, (42) 'baqqollo'; sorghum, (111) 'bisinga'; white sorghum, (116) 'bobe'; and coffee, (108) 'buna'. Their food also include meat, (116) 'fon'; fat meat, (79) 'çoma'; butter, (104) 'dada';

curds, (60) 'badu'; honey, (46) 'damma'; porridge, (69) 'marqa'; hot pepper, (18) 'mimmita'; salt, (124) 'sogidda'; honey-wine or hydromel, (101) 'dadi'; cabbage, (68) 'rafu'; calabash, (60) buqqe'; and local bear, (78) 'farso'; and fresh milk, 'annan'.

Ornaments: Earrings known as (116) 'loti' are worn by both sexes. These can be made of copper, silver or gold. "Warriors wear on the forehead the genitals of enemies they have killed; these may also be hung over the door and left till they drop off."⁴³ Referring to one of the ornaments that were given to brave warriors, Cerulli writes that:

the Galla (30) used to grant to the warrior who had killed five men, five buffaloes, and five lions, an armband called 'malda'. The 'malda' was awarded...during the feast, 'butta', after the reconing of the spoils.

As these elements of folk literature reflect patterns of collective thought and values of the Oromo, the fact that they are of cultural importance is beyond question: they are items of cultural treasures that reflect the ways of life of Oromo society and its history. Hence the next section is devoted to discussing FLGSA as a source of history.

Section 2. Historical Significance of FLGSA.

History, according to one of its definitions, is "the study of the past and the resulting oral or written record of what has happened in the past."⁴⁴

Before proceeding to see the historical significance of the text material in FLGSA it will be logical to examine first whether folk literature can be of help toward understanding the past.

A number of prominent scholars on folk literature maintain that oral sources accumulated in oral traditions can be

a source of knowledge about the past. They are not only the most important sources for the history of peoples without writing, but they are known to be the basis of many written sources too,... for they have been empirically very fruitful for all history since 1750 or 1800, complementing written data or being the major source for our knowledge.⁴⁵

Ryder also believes that folk literature contains "one of the most hopeful means of filling the yawning gaps in our knowledge of Africa's past, for most of the African continent documentary evidence alone affords only a very imperfect basis for the writing of history."⁴⁶ Therefore, "the historian is in a particularly favourable position when he is able to combine both documentary and oral sources"⁴⁷ while writing or reconstructing history.

It is, therefore, possible to conclude that the value of folk literature lies not only in its possibly being the source for written history but also in the fact that it "is frequently more informative and detailed...than contemporary written accounts."⁴⁸

Having thus established the fact that we can use folk literature as a source of history, we will now briefly see what significant historical facts appear in FLGSA.

Before the unification of Ethiopia, i.e., before 1850, intertribal clashes, and even wars between and among the various nationalities were common in the then almost divided and weak country. The Oromo 'motis' (regional kings) were like the princes of 'Zamana Masafint', (the Era of the Princes: 1769-1858), during which "Ethiopia underwent a process of disintegration in which the central authorities lost their power to war lords who fought each other for supremacy in the provinces."⁴⁹

This historical feature, that is, the prevalence of continual intertribal wars which was also very common among various Oromo war leader (Abbaa Duulaa) before the unification of Ethiopia is well documented in the numerous texts in FLGSA. The reasons for such endless intertribal wars were, among other things, "to occupy newly conquered territories"⁵⁰ or the competition of the war leaders "for the control of the trade and the trade routes"⁵¹ in the regions. It was those unfolding continual, fratricidal wars among the Oromo which compelled Almeida to write:

If God had not blinded them [the Oromo] and willed that certain families or tribes among them should be at war with one another constantly, there would not have been an inch of land in the Ethiopian empire of which they were not masters.⁵²

Cerulli's notes which are cited for example below, and the texts following them vividly demonstrate the interminable intertribal wars among the Oromo.

Oromo leaders of the Islamized small states of Guma (24-25), Jimma

- ¹⁷ Jan Vansina, Oral Traditions-A Study in Historical Methodology (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1965), p. 183.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 188-189.
- ¹⁹ W.G.B. Huntingford. op. cit., p. 17.
- ²⁰ Stith Thompson, "Folk Literature," Encyclopedia Britannica, (15th ed.), VIII, p. 455.
- ²¹ Ruth Finnegan, Oral Poetry (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 165.
- ²² Didier Papanoel, "Cultural Development: The Necessity to Study Traditional Cultures with the View of Realistic Development in Africa" (Zanzibar: EACROTANAL Information No. 4, 1982), p. 6.
- ²³ Kaarle Krohn, Folklore Methodology (Austin and London: The University of Texas Press, 1971), p. 93.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 47.
- ²⁵ Stith Thompson, "Folk Literature," Encyclopedia Britannica, op. cit., p. 456.
- ²⁶ Kaarle Krohn, op. cit., p. 26.
- ²⁷ Lambert Bartels quoting I.M. Lewis, op. cit., p. 37.
- ²⁸ G.H. Bantock, Culture, Industrialization and Education (New York: Humanities Press, 1968), p. 1.

- ²⁹ K.E.Knutsson, op. cit., pp. 45-53.
- ³⁰ Lambert Bartels, op. cit., p. 14.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 114.
- ³² K.E.Knutsson, op. cit., p. 97.
- ³³ Lambert Bartels, op. cit., p. 124
- ³⁴ Ibid., p. 14.
- ³⁵ K.E. Knutsson, op. cit., p. 47
- ³⁶ Lambert Bartels, "Dabo-A Form of Cooperation between Farmers among the Mecha Galla of Ethiopia" (Germany: International Review of Ethnology and Linguistics, Anthropos Vol. 70, 1971), pp. 888-919.
- ³⁷ Cornalius J. Jaenen, "The Galla or Oromo of East Africa" in Southern Journal of Anthropology, Vol. 12, No. 2 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1956), p. 172.
- ³⁸ Manoel de Almeida, Some Records of Ethiopia - 1593-1646 (trans.) C.F.Beckingham and G.W.R. Huntingford (Nendeln/Liechtenstein: Hakluyt Society, Kraus Reprint Limited, 1967), p. 137.
- ³⁹ Lambert Bartels, Oromo Religion, op. cit., p. 20.
- ⁴⁰ Cornalius J. Jaenen, op. cit., p. 188.
- ⁴¹ Donald N. Levine, Greater Ethiopia- The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 140-141.

and Gomma and Limma met in Gojji in 1886. These four Mussulmen kingdoms resolved to confederate and proclaimed a holy war (jehad) against the 'Galla' pagans. The league, was called 'Arfa Naggadota' to distinguish it from the pagan league which was formed later on. 'Arfa Naggadota' means 'the four merchants, because Islam was introduced by the Arabic merchants. Therefore 'Naggade' means both merchant and Mussulman. Cerulli goes on to note:

then was formed a pagan league (33) to oppose the Muslem league of Goggi. The allies were Lieqa Billo with its chief, Garbi Gilo; Lieqa Horda with its chief Tucco Danno; the Nole Kabba tribe; Hanna and other secondary tribes. The league took the name 'Arfa Oromota', i.e., 'the four pagans' corresponding to the name 'Arfa Naggadota', the four Mussulmen of Goggi. According to the Galla custom, both armies, before the battle, sang their song of defiance. Here is the song of the pagans.

P.	S.	V.		
34	18	1	Islam huddu diqattu	- 'The back-rinsing Mussulmen!'
		2	ise waggin dabalame nballesu	- 'I will not abase myself fighting with them'.
		9	arfan Oromota	- 'The four pagans',
		10	nuyu wamaḍḍina	- 'We will call'
		11	wal agarra badda	- 'We will meet each other on the plateau.'
		12	yo diben nu dibe	- 'If we are in trouble,'
		13	gara badda Lieqa	- 'toward the plateau of Lieqa'

P.	S.	V.			
34	18	14	Ligditti ergattina	-	'We will send messages to Ligdi'.
		15	yo dīben nu dibe	-	'If we are in trouble'
		16	gara badda sibu	-	'to the plateau of Sibu',
		17	Šonetti ergattina	-	'We will send messages to Šone.'
		18	ya gulanta Sibu	-	'O you, i.e., Šone the fortress of Sibu'
		19	Šone muḍi ribu	-	'Šone whose waist is like a rope'.
		23	nuyu isin egna	-	'We will await you there',
		24	baddarratti Qumba	--	'On the plateau of Qumba'.

Eventually the 'army' of the two opposing leagues met each other in the battle at a place called Qumba, the consequence of which is briefly stated by Cerulli as follows:

In the battle at Qumba, the army of the Mohammedans was defeated.. (34-5) Limmu sent a new army, which joined itself to the Guma forces and assailed the pagans at Giedo,... in the hilly banks of the Dīddeissa /River/... The Guma army was again pushed as far as the frontier of the kingdom i.e., of Guma and Ligdi Bakare took prisoner Abba Dīgga, the brother of Abba Ġubir. Abba Ġubir was the King of Guma... The army of Limmu, which had gone to aid Guma, after the battle at Giedo, was pushed by the Nole Kabba... Infact, the Nole Kabba penetrated Limmu as far as Hursa.

The following verses are from the triumph song of the pagans over the Mohammedans.

P.	S.	V.		
36	21	1	lola Nole Kabba	- 'The Battle at Nole Kabba',
		2	abban ole gabba	- 'whoever has failed repents his failure to take part in the battle
		3	Guma farda buse	- 'The Guma, leaving their horses behind, fled'!
		4	Lieqan kolfa qufe	- 'The Lieqa laughed at them'.
		28	Ligdin dalatera	- 'Infact, Liqdi is born',
		29	namm akka bakakka	- 'the man like thunder'.
		32	Oromon tokkore	- 'One Oromo',
		33	naggaden kuḍani	- 'against ten Mussulmen'!
		55	Limmu ttam gotare?	- 'Limmu, what can you do?
		56	Oromo malate	- 'The pagans have taken council',
		57	atu ttam gotare?	- 'and you (the Limu) what should you do?'
		58	hinergattu gomfa?	- 'Shouldn't you send us tribute'?
		59	buna sila nfunu	- 'We will never accept coffee as tribute (from you)!.
		60	warque hungulali	- 'Hord gold! i.e., send us gold only as tribute',
		61	kan kenna naddeni	- 'It is only our women',
		62	buqqe rkatti batti	- 'Who carry pumpkins in their hands'.

P.	S.	V.		
36	21	65	diraf nadden kessan ..	- 'But amongst you, who are the men and who are the women?'
		66	nu wali wallalle	- 'We cannot distinguish this. you are all the same'
		67	ega nu egadda ..	- 'Then! await us',
		68	masqala gubbani	- 'When the cross holiday has been celebrated'.

Verse 1-4 express that whoever failed to take part in the battle at Nole Kabba should regret very much, for it was a great loss to miss the pleasure of watching the fleeing Gumma (the Oromo Muslims) when they were chased by the pagans.

Verses 28-33 allude to an interprise of the famous warrior, Ligdi Bakare. Pursuing his enemies, he advanced as far as the village of Boqa Maraččo in Guma and challenged the people to send against him ten Muslim warriors (38) whom he alone fought and defeated.

Verses 55-60 refer to the triumphant pagans' intention to collect tribute only in gold, not in coffee, from the defeated kingdom of Guma. In addition,

Verses 61-62, 65-66 contain the usual pleasantries (38) about the Moslem ritual ablutions. When travelling, the Galla Mussulmen carry the water necessary for these ablutions in an empty pumpkin called 'masaqula'. The pagans say, among our people, only the women bring the pumpkins and draw the water; your men do this work fit only for women. Then who among you does the work fit for men? Perhaps the women? and the song [verses 67-68] ends with the threat of a new invasion.

Through a careful study of the poems in such songs as the ones cited above, one can infer the possible conditions in which they had been composed: they can reflect historic facts. That is why many scholars believe that historical songs are the sources of information about events in the past. Hence, though the present researcher has not come so far across any other written sources against which the historicity of the following poems may be checked, he would like to give one more example below. This is done in order to stress again that it is not only in documentary sources that we can get information about the past but also from oral sources in folk literature. Thus, even the following verses from the 'farsa'^{*} of the Oromo tribe in Lega Nagamte can attest to this fact.

P.	S.	V.		
64	32	35	fatanan hin'ara	- 'the tobacco with light leaves does not burn'
		36	Bošara Bidaru	- 'Bosara Bidaru'
		37	Amara torbani	- 'Amara during one week',
		38	nan aḡese ḡede	- 'I have killed! he said'.
		39	hindibaddu ḡede	- '"I will not anoint myself!" he said
		40	ḡuma bbako ḡede	- '"It is the blood-price of my father!" he said

*The 'farsa' are long poems with short verses, (58) in which are celebrated the most famous Oromo warriors.

P.	S.	V.		
64	32	41	Goḡḡam torbatam	- "Seventy Godjamians," and
		42	Šawan dibba šani	- "Five hundred Shoans I killed".
		43	guma nbase gede	- "It is the blood-price of my father" he said

As to the explanation of this song according to the information he got from Loransiyos, Cerulli states the following.

Verses 35-~~43~~ describe the terrible vengeance taken by the warrior, Bošara Bidaru upon the Amara. When the Shoans advanced to conquer Lieqa, Daḡḡac Lul Saggad, (65) commandant of an Amara corps, received the peaceful surrender of the clan Lieqa Wayo. However, after entering the country, the Amara soldiers began to sack and pillage the huts of the Galla. During this plundering, Bidaru, father of Bošara, was killed. Then his son, a youth of seventeen, devoted himself to a relentless hunting of Amara [soldiers]. Following the Shoan troops on their march, he assailed all the soldiers, who, disbanding in their usual way, detached themselves from their comrades.

It was against such warring parties, regional kings, and against the 'Gojjamie' forces in Wallagga and Kafa that Emperor Menelik II had to send his Shoan force led by Ras Gobana Danči, himself the son of a king (71) of the Tulama Oromo in Shoa, for the Emperor's major aim was to see a united, stronger Ethiopia rather than a divided and weaker country ruled by many petty kings.

According to Cerulli, Ras Gobana's

first expedition (71) was made against the Gurage, ...he conquered and plundered the country of the Gurage...Then he was sent by Menelik against the Galla of Shoa, and defeated...the Abbičču and Galan [Oromo]. He marched victoriously into Falle, and established his chief camp. There he was appointed 'ras'. After making sure of the dominion of his kingdom over...Shoa, Menelik also desired to extend his frontiers beyond the Gibe. At this time, (72) those Galla districts were occupied by the Godjamian army...as far as Kafa. Ras Daraso, [who was king Takla Haymanot of Gojjam's officer in these regions] had under his command the army of Ginna, the Lieqa Horda led by Tuččo Danno...and the Gudru. Menelik sent against these troops Ras Gobana, who.... forced Daraso to retreat....Ras Daraso continued his march toward Gojjam till he reached Imbabo, a plain in Gudru [Wallagga]. There he stopped and awaited his enemies, drawn up for battle. After numerous actions favorable to the Godjamians, the King Takla-Haymanot himself appeared on the field of battle, [of Imbabo]...On Sunday, December 25, 1875 (Anyssinian era). The Shoans won a great victory. Takla-Hymanot was taken prisoner...Gobana, seeing the king Takla Hymanot, cried to him (in Amharic), "Goğgamie 'waçit' aswarğin", meaning,

O Godgamian, "help me let down the plate!"* answering thus a boast of Takla-Hymanot, who had said that: "After the battle (73) Ras Gobana will bear my 'mitad'** during the return journey to Gojjam."

After flattering the humiliated king Takla-Hymanot in Amharic (in the king's mother tongue), Ras Gobana boasts in Oromo as follows:

garaba šaffisa`ddi	-	'Shave, O sharpened razor!'
gofta dağgač Daraso	-	Daggač Daraso's lord, i.e., king Takla-Hymanot,***

* My own translation

** The 'mitad is a plate of iron (73) or of clay soil used by the Abyssinians to bake bread.

*** My own translation

ganaman salp̄isise Danči - in the morning has been humbled by
(the son of) Danči i.e., by Ras
Gobana.

These oral sources that Cerulli recorded about the battle of Imbabo remarkably support the documentary sources. For instance, regarding the deep desire which King Takla-Hymanot of Gojjam had to occupy Gudru (Horro is a district in Gudru-Wallagga) and other neighbouring regions such as Kafa, Terrēfe Wolde Tsadik writes:

Ras Darasu crossed the Abbay [the Blue Nile River] and camped in Horro in 1881...having heard in 1881 that the Gojamites had invaded Guma [Kafa], defeated and killed its 'governor Aba Ğobir,... Menelik promptly sent Ras Gobana and his Galla cavalry to attack the Gojamites, drive them to their own country and collect tribute from the Kingdom of Kaffa.⁵³

Thus, "Gojjam and Shoa soon entered into a direct military confrontation which culminated in the Shoan victory at the battle of Himbabo,...when Takla-Hymanot himself was taken prisoner.⁵⁴ On the same subject under question, that is, on the battle of Imbabo, Caulk also states that Gobana led Menelik's army to Imbabo, and

two hours later, Takla-Hymanot had been captured. After five more hours of desperate fighting, Daraso and other stubborn commanders were forced to yield. When a count was made, one-fifth of Takla-Hymanot's soldiers (929 men)...were found dead; 1,738 had been wounded; all the rest were prisoners. Six cannons and an assortment of some 3,700 other fire arms as well as all the defeated army's baggage train had been captured...⁵⁵

The above cited documentary sources on the battle of Imbabo confirm very well with the oral version in FLGSA. Folk literature, hence, is indeed a source of knowledge about the past, because for a thorough understanding of literature and history, a knowledge of folk literature is essential, for it keeps the past alive in tales and songs⁵⁶.

The other important historical fact which appears in FLGSA is the Dervishes' attempt to invade Wallagga, and the crushing defeat they suffered from Emperor Menelik's gallant general, Ras Gobana Danči, and his Oromo allies in the region.

Cerulli notes that (73) after his victory over the 'Cojjamies' at Imbabo, Ras Gobana advanced toward the Čabo Oromo and defeated them. Then he marched to the Hadya and defeated Hasan Injamom the Hadya's chief, for he had rebelled and declared (74) a holy war against the Christians. Next, Ras Gobana entered Limmu and defeated the Nonno Oromo. This was all accomplished before he was compelled to start a campaign, this time not against the internal forces of disunity, but against external forces from the Sudan. The following brief note of Cerulli, and the text that follows it, along with some documentary sources on the subject testify to this fact, that is, to the Dervishes' advance into Wallagga and the devastating blow they suffered from Ras Gobana and his allies. Accordingly, Cerulli notes that after subduing the people in the regions mentioned above,

he [Ras Gobana] was obliged to begin a new campaign against the Dervishes of the Mahdi. The Mahdi (82) during his war against the Emperor Johannes IV ending with the battle at Matamma, had sent an expedition to Wallaga hoping that the Mussulmen of the region would be favourable to him...When the Arabs of the Mahdi entered Galla territory,...Ras Gobana moved against the invaders with Daggač Moroda and Moroda's brother, Fitawrari Amante leading the Lieqa Nagamte and the Tuqa. The two armies fought...and the Mussulmen were defeated (83) by Gobana. Then the Dervishes withdrew to the Sudan, and the Galla allies of Gobana massacred the fugitives, especially their Galla compatriots...who had helped the strangers to enter Wallaga. However, Ras Gobana, in order to avoid the prolongation of this barbarous carnage, ordered his auxiliary troops to bring to him as prisoners all fugitives who yielded, and forbade the killing and the cutting of the genitals of these defenseless prisoners. These orders caused great discontent among the Galla soldiers of Moroda; Moroda himself did not execute this proclamation of Gobana. A rebellion of the Galla auxiliary troops threatened. However, Gobana prevented the rebellion by an energetic action. He...called the chiefs of the Galla to a meeting. When an officer of the Lieqa Nagamte appeared at the meeting, riding a horse whose bridle was adorned with the genitals of the prisoners, Gobana...flung at him the wooden stool on which he had been sitting.

Killing and, among other things, the cutting off of the genitals of men for trophies have been among the highly esteemed cultural practices of the Oromo. Since Ras Gobana's orders which are cited above went against these Oromo cultural norms, they caused discontent among the Oromo troops. The following verses from a song text in FLGSA attest this fact.

P.	S.	V.		
83	49	1	Gobanno ģirma ģige	- 'Gobana is a trunk which fell down'.
		2	Morin Diddessa gute	- 'Moroda is the River Diddessa when it overflows'

P.	S.	V.		
83	49	30	garri moti Amara	- 'These people of the Amara king;
		31	agesif nu wamani	- 'They called on us to kill.'
		32	agefna nu danani	- 'And yet, when we killed, they hit us'...
		60	Gobana mal kessani	- Where have you/the Salalie people put Gobana?
		61	garro moti Salale	- 'That king of Salale;
		62	isa sire kessani	- 'you have enable him to sit on the throne'.
		63	ofigala tessani	- 'But you have put yourselves down'.
		64	bakarattin kiessani-	'Why don't you pierce him with a big spear?'
		65	Minilek guyaf moe	- 'Menelik is reigning because of good fortune'.
		70	garbičči birri lama	- 'The slave (whose price is)two Birr
		71	loko natt ergifate	- 'Sending his bridle against me,
		72	mirgasa na mbaččisu	- 'He cannot burden me with his own trophies!'
		73	godala rre na gođe	- 'He has made me a big male ass!'
		74	daku natti baččise	- 'He has loaded me with flour!'

In verse 1 is expressed the Oromo troops' negative attitude toward Gobana's orders which forbade them to kill and/or to cut off the genitals

of prisoners of war. Hence Ras Gobana is compared to a useless, fallen tree. Dajjazmac Moroda, on the other hand, is extolled and is compared, in verse 2, with the River Diddessa when it rises to the brim of its banks, for, according to the text above, Moroda did not execute Ras Gobana's orders as regards the cutting off of the enemy's genitals. Then in verses 30-32, the minstrel expresses the Oromo troops' complaint against Ras Gobana's contradictory orders.

Verses 60-64 allude to the Oromo troops' belief that since Ras Gobana went against Oromo culture for the reasons indicated above, and also since he had become Emperor Menelik's 'bridle' by which the Emperor could control many regions, the Salale Oromo should rid themselves of Gobana by piercing him with a very big spear. Verses 70-74 again refer to the Oromo troops' complaint that Menelik, sending his 'bridle' (Gobana) against them, should not mistreat them. 'Flour' in verse 74 possibly refers to the army provisions which (some of) the Oromo army might have carried during the battle against the Dervishes. The singer notes (85) that with such a command of the war...the warrior becomes similar to an ass: that is, he bears only provisions, not spoils, i.e., genitals of the conquered warriors.

The above oral source on the Dervishes' advance into Wallagga, and on the victory the Ethiopians scored on them is supported by various documentary sources. For instance, Terrefe Walde Tsadik writes:

In March 1888, the Mahdist Sudanese....invaded Wallaga and proceeded to Gumma, from where they sent envoys carrying a shirt

and a sword as gift to Abba Jifar of Jimma, of course with the aim of inducing him to side with them. Abba Jifar sent emissaries to Entoto to notify Gobana of the danger posed by the Mahdist aggression... The same year, Gobana set out from Shoa to meet the Dervishes, on whom he later inflicted a severe defeat, on the Beni-Shangul-Wallaga border... This war eliminated the Mahdist in the southwest and cleared the way for future assimilation of Beni-Shangul into the Ethiopian Empire.⁵⁷

On the same topic, Tasamma Ta'a also writes that the

combined army of Gobana and the two Leqa leaders i.e., Moroda, and Moroda's brother, Amante, of Leqa Nagamte and Leqa Tuqa respectively fought and defeated the Mahdists and their allies who consolidated their forces at Gute Dili [in Wallagga]. Many of the Ansars [Dervishes] were killed and others were harassed back to the Sudan. One of the allies of the Ansars [Dervishes], Waqbulcho Kussa was slaughtered and his head was made to float in the Dabus River.⁵⁸

This same fact is again well articulated by Triulzi who writes that

in September 1888....Gobana set off immediately to contrast the Dervish offensive...Early in October, the combined troops of Gobana and Moroda crossed the Diddessa River. They were met on the 14th by the Ansar [Dervish] and their allies. The Battle was fought from dawn to dusk without interruption, victory going to the Shoan and Leqa troops at the end of a bloody confrontation. On such occasion 5000 Muslim fighters were killed and 1,325 guns were taken from the enemy. Gobana then pursued the fleeing Dervishes up to the Dabus River.⁵⁹

Since the "comparison of two source enables one to arrive at a more complete picture of the whole occurrence",⁶⁰ I have checked the oral sources in FLCSA against the documentary sources that reflect

on the same subject. This is done so as to prove the historical authenticity of the oral sources under study. In so doing, it has been proved that the oral sources in FLGSA are reliable historical testimonies as regards the Dervishes advance into west and southwest Ethiopia and their devastating defeat by Ras Gobana and his allies at the battle of Gute Dili in Wallagga.

It can also be perceived that it was under Emperor Menelik's sovereignty and his 'unifying' effort, and backed by Ras Gobana "Danči," the outstanding conqueror among the races"⁶¹ and by many others of Abyssinia's true sons that united Ethiopia became a reality.

Furthermore, besides its cultural and historical importance, FLGSA has some more social significance to our present-day Ethiopian society. This social significance lies, for instance, in the considerable contribution such study as this thesis makes to the fulfilment of the objectives of the 'Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities that was established "by the revolutionary leadership to solve the question of nationalities in Ethiopia."⁶² According to proclamation number 236/1983 of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, the objectives of the Institute are

1. to study the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of Ethiopian nationalities
2. to conduct studies concerning the constitution, the state structure and administrative set-up on the basis of which a People's Democratic Republic is to be established in Ethiopia.⁶³

Hence, among the main duties of the Institute are to

make studies on the basis of which nationality languages and cultures...shall be developed and popularized, and to conduct a study on how the history, custom and cultural heritage of the different nationalities shall be collected, carefully recorded, used for practical and educational purposes and on how mutual exchange among cultures of the different nationalities may be developed.⁶⁴

Thus, the establishment of the Institute by the Revolutionary Government is the result of the translation into practice of what had been stated previously in the Government's Programme of the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia, according to which "the history, culture, language and religion of each nationality will have equal recognition [and that] the unity of Ethiopia's nationalities will be based on...equality, brotherhood and mutual respect"⁶⁵

This point was again articulated when Comrade Mengistu Haile Mariam, General Secretary of the Workers Party of Ethiopia, Chairman of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, and Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces declared in his Central Report to the historic Party Founding Congress that the objectives of the Party Programme include "to raise...the material and cultural standards... of the working people"⁶⁶ of Ethiopia, and that "the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia...will be a state where no citizen will be discriminated on account of sex, religion, race or nationality, and one in which a society of equality and human relations will prevail".⁶⁷

He accordingly underscored that the attainment of this goal would certainly facilitate "the proper utilization of the country's natural and manpower resources in order to ease the difficulties facing Ethiopian society"⁶⁸ today.

One of such 'difficulties' facing Ethiopian society today is lack of proper understanding of cultural and historical knowledge among Ethiopian nationalities. This is the legacy of the former oppressive order's 'divide and rule' policy under which inequality among nationalities was a common social feature, whereas now, according to the Party Programme, equality of Ethiopian nationalities is taken into account: the very fact that the "participants of the Workers Party of Ethiopia Founding Congress came from 72 different nationalities"⁶⁹ of Ethiopia, ascertains that the Workers Party of Ethiopia is indeed the vanguard party of the whole of Ethiopian nationalities.

Therefore, since the student of literature is likely better to understand that the purposeful study of folk literature not only "provides a systematic view of the creative activities of mankind, serving as the main forms developed for expressing human emotion throughout history"⁷⁰ but also helps to bring about closer intimacy and better understanding even among differing peoples, to accelerate the unity of our nationalities, it is hoped that Ethiopian scholars of literature and of related disciplines can be encouraged to study the folk literature of our numerous nationalities and bring to light the immense riches of our traditional cultures. It is through a hard look

at ourselves, as Dathorne⁷¹ stresses, that we can understand ourselves and also help others to understand us more. And if we understand ourselves well there will certainly follow an even smoother channel of mutual respect among the many Ethiopian nationalities. This, then, helps in bringing about a better psychic unity among our nationalities which will in turn enable them to march shoulder to shoulder in a more harmonious manner as the true sons of one motherland to foil any divisive attitude or external aggression as did their fathers for many centuries. They would instead work hand in hand toward the advancement and general well-being of their motherland, Ethiopia.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

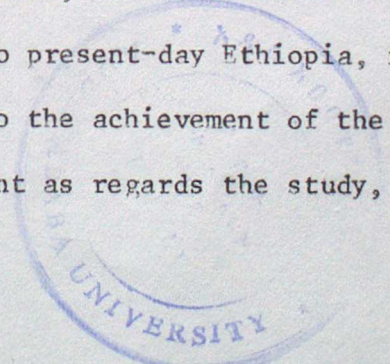
On the basis of the discussion made within the scope of this study in the foregoing chapters, the following conclusions are drawn.

FLGSA is a pioneering contribution to, and the first motivating scholarly work on, the Oromo folk literature studies. FLGSA is meritorious for the fact that the oral texts in it serve dual purposes: they serve as the reflection of the socio-cultural environment of Oromo society within the context of late nineteenth century Ethiopia in that they throw light on the Oromo world view and important cultural traits, and hence, FLGSA is indeed a genuine record of the Oromo culture; FLGSA; for which Cerulli has been called "the doyen of Galla folklore studies",⁷² also contains texts which serve as a source of history of late nineteenth century Ethiopia, because the oral sources which deal with some major occurrences of the period and which are checked against documentary sources have been shown in this study to be authentic historical testimonies of major events of the time such as the persistence of intertribal wars among the Oromo themselves, the battle of Imbabo, and the battle of Gute Dili, and therefore, FLGSA is a good repertoire of some important historical events in Ethiopia.

There is more to FLGSA than this: these historical facts, besides reflecting on the socio-cultural environment of the Oromo in the late nineteenth century, also imply that when the oral sources of other Ethiopian nationalities are studied in depth, they can throw much

light on how modern Ethiopian history may be reconstructed, for a "good general survey of the whole of Ethiopian history does not yet exist"⁷³. Therefore, as FLGSA has become the basis for this thesis, it is hoped that the present study will also attract in its turn the attention of some other native scholars of our country and encourage them to engage themselves in a more comprehensive research in the folk literature prevalent in their respective mother tongues. In so doing, "we are in a very real sense studying ourselves. Since in folk literature we are most likely to be ourselves, from folk literature we are most likely to know ourselves."⁷⁴

The researcher hopes, therefore, that this study will enable us to realize the value of folk literature as the portrayal of the culture of a people and as a source of history, for, as has been indicated, the oral texts in FLGSA, besides reflecting on the Oromo culture, have been proved to be reliable information sources of the past regarding some important events in Ethiopia at the advent of the twentieth century. These two aspects of FLGSA, that is, its nature as a genuine repertoire of the Oromo culture, and as a source of history makes it of great significance to present-day Ethiopia, for it contributes a lot, among other things, to the achievement of the objectives of the revolutionary government as regards the study, and the unity of Ethiopian nationalities.



FOOTNOTE

¹W.G. Campbell, Form and Style in Thesis Writing (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., n.d.), p. 12.

²Eshetu Kebede, "The 'verb' to be' in Oromo" (Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1981), pp. 2-3.

³Asmarom Legesse, Gada-Three Approaches to the Study of African Society (London: The Free Press, 1973), p. 316.

⁴Desalegn Seyoum, "Gender Indicating Morphemes in Oromo Adjectives" (Unpublished Bachelor of Arts thesis in Amharic, Addis Ababa University, Department of Ethiopian Languages and Literature, 1978), p. 15.

⁵Karl Tutschek, Lekicon Der Galla Sprache (Munchen: 1844), p. XXIV.

⁶G.W.B. Huntingford, The Galla of Ethiopia-The Kingdoms of Kafa and Janjero (London: International African Institute, Lowe and Brydone Printers Ltd., 1969), p. 19.

⁷Ibid., p. 23

⁸Karl E. Knutsson, Authority and Change- A Study of the Kallu Institution Among the Mecha Galla of Ethiopia (Goteborg: Etnografiska Museet, 1967), p. 30.

⁹Lambert Bartels, Oromo Religion-Myths and Rites of the Western Oromo of Ethiopia (Berlin: Collectanea Instituti Anthropos, Vol. 8, 1983), p. 13.

¹⁰M.L.Bender (ed), The Non-Semitic Languages of Ethiopia (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1976), p. 166.

¹¹M.L.Bender et. al., Language in Ethiopia (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 130.

¹²John Markakis, Ethiopia-Anatomy of a Traditional Polity (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 52-53.

¹³Alessandro Triulzi, "The Epic of Gute Dili in Mecha Traditions of Western Wallega" (paper read at the International Symposium on History and Ethnography in Ethiopian Studies which was Organized in Collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute in Addis Ababa, Addis Ababa University, November 18-25, 1982).

¹⁴M.Jacobs, The Content and Style of an Oral Literature (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 121.

¹⁵K.S. Goldstein, A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore(Hatboro: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1964), p. 88.

¹⁶Francis Lee Utley, "Folk Literature: An Operational Definition" in The Study of Folklore, Alan Dundes (ed.) (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1965), pp. 20-21.

- ⁴²G.W.B.Huntingford, op. cit., p. 66.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 69.
- ⁴⁴C.Briton et. al., A History of Civilization, Vol. I, Second ed. (New Jersey; Printice Hall, Inc., 1960), p.3.
- ⁴⁵Jan Vansina, op. cit., pp. X-XIX.
- ⁴⁶Alan Ryder, "Traditions and History" in Africa Discovers Her Past by J.D.Fage (ed.) (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 32.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 45.
- ⁴⁸C.Gabel and N.R.Bennet (eds.), Reconstructing African Culture History (Boston: Boston University Press, 1967), pp. 236-237.
- ⁴⁹Mordechai Abir, Ethiopia-The Era of the Princes (London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., n.p., (overleaf).
- ⁵⁰Tasamma Ta'a, "The Oromo of Wallega: A Historical Survey to 1910", (unpublished Master's thesis, School of Graduate Studies, Addis Ababa University, 1980), p. 23.
- ⁵¹Ibid., p. 58
- ⁵²Manoel de Almeida, op. cit., p. 135.
- ⁵³Terrefe Wolde Tsadik, "The Unification of Ethiopia, 1800-1935: Wallaga" in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. VI, No.1 (Haile Selassie I University, I.E.S., 1968), pp. 75-76.

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⁶⁶The Ethiopian Herald, September 7, 1984, p.1.

⁶⁷Ibid., p.6.

⁶⁸Ibid., p.7.

⁶⁹The Ethiopian Herald, September 9, 1984, p.5.

⁷⁰K.S.Goldstein, op. cit., p. 55.

⁷¹O.R. Dathorne, The Black Mind: A History of African Literature (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1974), p. vii.

⁷²P.T.W. Baxter, "Some Preliminary Observation on a Type of Arsi Song, 'Wellu', which is Popular with Young Men" (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, IV Congresso Internazionale di Studi Etiopici, 1974), p. 809.

⁷³Donald N. Levine, op. cit., p.211.

⁷⁴G.W.Boswell and J.R. Reaver, op. cit., p. 204.

⁵⁴Tasamma Ta'a, op. cit., p. 76.

⁵⁵R.A.Caulk, "Territorial Competition and the Battle of Embabo" in Journal of Ethiopian Studies, Vol. 13, No.1 (Haile Selassie I University, I.E.S., 1975), p. 83.

⁵⁶G.W.Boswell and J.R. Beaver, Fundamentals of Folk Literature (Oosterhout: Anthropological Publications, 1962), pp. 206-207.

⁵⁷Terrefe Woldetsadik, op. cit., p. 82.

⁵⁸Tasamma Ta'a, op. cit., p. 80.

⁵⁹Alessandro Triulzi, "The Epic of Gute Dili", op. cit.

⁶⁰Jan Vansina, op. cit., p. 139.

⁶¹Terrefe Woldetsadik, op. cit., p. 79.

⁶²The Ethiopian Herald, "For Unity of Nationalities," September 6 1984, p.1.

⁶³"A Proclamation to Provide for the Establishment of the Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities, No. 236/1983" in Negarit Gazeta No. 7 (Addis Ababa: Berhanena Selam Printing Press, 1983), p. 32.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 32.

⁶⁵Programme of the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa: Artistic Printers Ltd., n.d.), pp. 16-17.

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