

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
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**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE ORAL  
POETRY OF THE PEOPLE OF FOGERA**

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## **Definition of Local Terms**

**Aguat** - Milk Product boiled and used after butter is separated by shaking.

**Awdema** - bare-land used for threshing (threshing floor).

**Bäšta** - An Endemic disease that killed a large number of people within a short period of time.

**čäguaraläbaš** - A person who had thousands of milk cows.

**Das** - A temporary shelter usually made of straw, which is supported by wood poles and held in position by ropes fixed into the ground.

**Qälaš** - An ox which leads the crowd during threshing activity.

Kolba- The name given to the ox which has a brunette color.

**Koräfé** - A none alcoholic local beer made from barley.

**Majät** - A room where food is kept, prepared and cooked and where the dishes are washed.

**Mächal** - The name of the ox which has a good manner.

**Sälän** - A shaped piece of thick woven material made from a plant with feathery leaves for covering floors.

**šefta** - A man who robs others property by bandit.

Tawnt- A woman who shares love with other's husband.



## **Abstract**

The people of Fogera have a wide range of poems with numerous themes. Discussing the major themes of this community's oral poem is the objective of this research. To materialize this objective, data were collected from five sub-districts of Fogera district from February 20 to March 15/2008.

Apart from note taking, the methods applied to collect the data were observation and interview. The data collection was carried out with the instrumentality of audio and video recording as well as photographing devices.

These methods enabled the researcher to record on the spot songs and poetic recitals along with actual performances. This approach also enabled the researcher to decipher further meanings since the information is obtained from the poets themselves.

Among the collected poems fifty eighth representative poems were selected for discussion in this research. The nature of contexts and their themes were taken as a consideration for selection and analysis.

Based on the collected poems, in this research, an attempt is made to identify the major themes of the oral poems of the people of Fogera. Reflecting strong social attachment, praising their land of origin, the transformation of the people of Fogera from cattle rearing to rice farming and the economic significance of ox for the farmer are some of them from the identified themes in this research.

From the themes of the poems studied in this research, it is possible to understand that the people of Fogera capture their socio-economic activity through their oral poems. All in all it is possible to see that the oral poems of the people of Fogera can reflect the people's life style.



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# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Area Selected for the Study

Fogera District, where the present study is conducted is located in the South Gondar Zone of the Amhara National Regional State. Its boundaries are in the north, Libo Komkem, in the east Farta, in the south Dara District and by Lake Tana in the west. Fogera District consists of 28 sub-districts. The study area consists of sub-districts of Woreta Zuria, Shaga Mariam, Kuhar Michael, Rib Gabriel and Tewana Zaka'na.

The study area covers about 1174.14 square kilometers. The vast area is plain comprises 76% of the whole land while the remaining 24 % is plateau ( Fogera district information office). The plain area begins immediately from the capital, Woreta, runs north and west to Lake Tana, Libo Kemkem sub-district and Dara sub-district. On the other hand, the plateau areas of the district extends generally as far as east and south of the capital to the boarders of Farta and Dara districts ( Fogera district Rural Development office). According to the Amhara National Regional State Finance and Economy Development Office, the estimated population size of the district in 2007 was 251,714.

In general terms, the people of Fogera are characterized as predominantly agriculturalists. Though the society covers a large geographical area, they share a fairly homogenous culture. The majority of the people are followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. However, there are also Muslims in the towns of Woreta, Aember and in the village of Meneguzar. The Awra-Amba communities who are referred to Arbambas by the local people are also living in Woje-Arbamba sub-districts.

In Fogera, teff, oil seeds, varieties of crops and rice are grown predominantly. A recent study in the area, however, shows that rice is becoming the corner stone of the

livelihood of the people, especially to those people dwelling in the plain area of the district. Due to the marketability of rice and the high yield, the plain area is becoming attractive and conducive for the local inhabitants as well as people outside the district (Fogera district information office).

The plateau areas of Fogera are irregularly covered by forests. On the other hand, the plain area is not covered by forests with the exception that people are planting eucalyptus trees around their farms and individual homesteads. This situation is clearly verified by a saying, which goes **ፎገራ ላላወቀው ጫካ ነው።** "Fogera is a wild jungle for those who never experienced it ". Any one, who has never been there, may get lost amidst of the vast plain area.

Moreover, Fogera is known for its cattle rearing practices even among the people of Ethiopia. ([pms-ethiopia.org/pilot-learning-sited /Fogera-asp/](http://pms-ethiopia.org/pilot-learning-sited/Fogera-asp/)). According to informants, some five or six decades ago a rich farmer used to own up to a thousand milk cows, let alone the whole cattle he had possessed. According to the tradition, such people were called cheguara Lebash. However, these days, rearing animals is conducted for their utility, for their indispensable uses in farming and as a source of food than just for the sake of pride.

Informants indicated that reduction in the number of cattle is due to the inefficiency as well as shortages of grazing lands in the studied area. However, in the past there used to be virgin and fallow land owned by the community together. There were no boundaries between farmers grazing land and it was possible to graze every where. Now a day, however, there is no such free access to virgin fallow land. Presently, grazing lands are crossed by a complex network of boundaries. Every one is restricted to his holdings, either for grazing or cultivation, unless some areas might be made free by the government for the purpose of common grazing Thus, farmers are now shifting from rearing huge number of cattle to rearing few oxen and cows. Instead of that, the local people shifted from their age old tradition of rearing cattle to producing rice.

Fogera District has been selected for the study because of the following reasons. First and foremost, because the researcher was born and grew up there, he was aware of how the people of Fogera have been rich in oral poetry that widely covered studies have not been conducted so far. The other point was, as the researcher was part of that society, he has partially been acquainted with some of the poems used in the study. And this helps the researcher to conduct the study without much challenge in getting informants and analyzing the poems.

Even though the study district has 28 sub-districts, the researcher believed that the above selected five sub-districts can represent the whole culture of Fogera because of the fact that the people share similar way of life. Nearer to the town of Woreta and the availability of resourceful informants in the selected sub-districts were taken as criteria for selection.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

The people of Fogera, like the people in other parts of Ethiopia, have a wide range of poems with numerous themes. Through oral literature, they express themselves in their agricultural fields, on funeral ceremonies, weddings, on religious holidays, herding their cattle, etc. In Connection with this Okpehwo (1992:137) said, "..... there is hardly any occasion or activity in traditional African life that is not accompanied by songs and chants". The Fogera people are not an exception in this regard.

Although there is a growing interest of research in the area, there is still a great deal of literature not yet studied. Especially, from the perspective of the new insights of performance theory, still there is a large potential in this field to conduct researches. One of the genres of this area of literature which has not been given much attention is oral poetry. As far as the writer's observation is concerned in the review of related literature part of this paper, except Ambachew Alebachew and Nurhussien Muhamed Amharic BA theses, there is no other works regarding the oral poetry of the people of Fogera.

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

#### **General objective**

The general objective of the study is to study the major themes of the oral poems of the people of Fogera District.

#### **Specific objectives**

- To collect the oral poems of the people of Fogera.
- To identify the major themes manifested in the poems and to understand the contexts in which they use in the oral poems.
- To provide some background information for other social science researchers in general and the researchers of oral poetry in particular towards the study of the people of fogera.

### 1.4 Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following questions.

- What are the major themes reflected in Fogera oral poetry?
- In what contexts do the people of Fogera perform oral poetry?

### 1.5 Methodology of the study

The methods used in this thesis are collection of poems, selection and analysis. Before collecting the data, the theoretical aspects of folklore in general and oral poetry in particular are developed from the library through intensive reading.

This research is largely based on data obtained from field work, done all together in 25 days, from February 20 to March 15/2008. The methods applied to collect the data were

participant observation and interview, with the help of audio and video recording materials, note taking and photographing devices.

Regarding the relevance of the above two methods, Goldstein (1974:77) notes "of the several methods and techniques which may be used by the collector in the field work, the two will serve to supply him with practically all the data necessary for the solution of field problems. These two methods [are] observation and interviews..." Hence, using these two methods, efforts have been made to collect the oral poems of the people of Fogera district.

Many folklorists believe that participant observation enables a researcher to gather the oral poems of the people with their emotions in the natural contexts. " Those methods used by the field worker in obtaining data by direct observation.... is not limited only to visual aspects of the situation, but also involves a full range of sensual experience including hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting..." (Ibid).

With regard to this view, with the guide of field assistants, the researcher has observed two funeral ceremonies in two sub-districts such as Shaga Mariam and Woreta Zuria. As the observation was conducted in the natural context, it enabled the researcher to record oral poems as they were actually performed.

Among those two funeral ceremonies, the one, which is conducted in Shaga Mariam was recorded both by audio and video whereas the funeral ceremony conducted in Woreta Zuria was recorded only by tape because of the limited capacity of Video Camera. Those events recorded on both audio and video were taken with the permission of the concerned participants at the occasion.

Because the assistants of the researcher were familiar to the people of the study area and some of the participants of the funeral ceremonies were their relative, there was no any obstacle in this regard.

The process of recording with the help of field assistants helped the researcher to attend the funeral ceremonies freely. Moreover, as far as the researcher's experience is concerned, during the analysis of the themes of the collected poems, those video and audio recordings helped him to remember their full range of emotions, such as their body languages, physical movements, way of expressions, hearings, etc. in the actual performance.

In addition to this, those two funeral ceremonies provided a good opportunity to the researcher to have contact with different people gathered from the selected sub-districts at the same time. This enabled him to identify most of the key informants regarded to be knowledgeable in the areas of singing and reciting poems. Some elderly men who could provide sufficient information with regard to the contextual meaning and the cultural background of some of the collected poems were also selected during that time.

The other employed method of data collection was interview. The purpose of the interview method is to elicit rich and detailed information that can be used in the analysis. Regarding the relevance of the interview method of data collecting, Goldstein (Ibid: p.104) suggests, "The information which may be obtained through observation by the collector is limited to situations and performances which are external to the inner man..." According to him, interview is an important method in order to investigate such kinds of inner information from informants.

Goldstein (Ibid: p.83) further noted that when "certain ... events might never occur during the collector's stay in the community..." data could be collected through interview with those in the society who have experienced the events. Due to such kind of reason the researcher collected some seasonal work songs using the interview method.

Moreover, the observed performances and recorded poems were further strengthened through interviews of selected key informants, those who were observed during those events indicated above and other informants who were not included in the observation.

With the guide of field assistants the interview method was conducted in T←lla bet and Araqi bet (a house where people drink local beer and liquor), in the work place, and in the residence of an individual.

According to the designed interview questions, the number of the interviewees ranged from group to an individual. The method of group interview provided access to the researcher to collect group view on some culture based expressions and the occasions which did not occur during the short stay of the researcher in the field.

Especially threshing poems were entirely collected using this group interview method in T←lla bet. This is because the fact that, the time of the field work was not the right time to access such kind of actual activities. On the other hand most of agricultural work songs were employed in the actual performance of the farmers on their work place.

Most of the interviews conducted were recorded on tape. And the record included the name, age, sex, address and occupation of the interviewees. In addition to this, notes were taken down during and after interviews.

In general, a total of 25 informants, who were found to be knowledgeable of the culture of the study area and skilful in composing and singing oral poems were employed from five selected sub-districts.

By the end of the field work, a total of one hundred five poems were recorded. These were collected from the observation of the actual funeral ceremonies and interviews of informants whose age ranges between 23 to 70.

After collecting, transcribing the tape recorded poems into a written language made soon after returning from the field. This was advantageous in that the researcher could recall the informant's characteristics, body languages, dialects and the overall mood of the interviews as well as the full ranges of emotions of the funeral ceremonies.

As far as the researcher's experience is concerned, transcription is the highest level of processing for sound recordings. It requires highly concentration to produce a reliable written text that is very faithful to the spoken words as recorded and yet that is very readable.

In order to understand imperfect pronunciations, interruptions, the overriding of voices speaking simultaneously, the researcher listened to the recorded text repeatedly until he was convinced, and then he continued to transcribing the data.

Then, the researcher made an effort to select the collected poems into their themes and contexts.

The other point is translation. After the transcription and the selection process were carried out, translating the data from the source language to the target language was undertaken. Translating the poems from one language to another language is a very challenging activity. This is because repetition of words and phrases, the placement of rests and/or punctuation, the quality of vowels sung on high notes, and the rhythmic feature of the poems and other poetic features are more natural to the original language than to the target language. However, to minimize the problems, efforts have been made by using different techniques such as finding equivalent expression, paraphrasing in the receptor language and using explanatory notes.

Then analysis followed after selection and translation. Out of the collected poems, only fifty eight representative poems have been analyzed in terms of themes. To avoid redundancy, the rest which are considered to have similar themes with the analyzed poems are attached in the appendix.

## 1.6 Limitation of the Study

Like the people in other parts of Ethiopia, the people of Fogera have a wide range of poems with numerous themes. However, because some of the events are seasonal, it was

difficult to observe the actual performance of all poems during the researcher's short stay in the field. In this connection, among the selected poems for analysis, threshing poems were not collected in the actual performance of the work place due to the fact that it was not the right time of such kind of activity while the researcher was in the field. Therefore, to understand its context, efforts have been made by means of interviews with those in the community who have experienced such events. In addition to this, due to the interrelated and overlapping nature of threshing poems and plowing poems, the researcher's actual observation of the agricultural activity has its own contribution to understand the context of threshing poems.

Moreover, as the field work was conducted during the fasting season, it was difficult to access wedding occasions during that time. Because of this reason, the researcher preferred to concentrate more on what he actually observing their contexts that are funeral songs and heroic recitals rather than conducting wedding poems.

### 1.7 Significance of the study

The research is expected to have various significances. As Finnegan (1970:519) stressed, oral poetry is very essential to understand the society's way of life. This study, therefore, has its own contribution in preserving some of the poems that can provide a clue to investigate how the people of Fogera express their feeling towards life in general. Furthermore, it might provide a bases for further studies on culture, history, beliefs, and other related fields in the area.

## **Chapter Two**

### **A Review of Related Literature**

The purpose of the review is to develop a theoretical framework for the study and to review some of the works conducted in the field of oral poetry. This enabled the researcher to consolidate background information on the study area and to develop theory and practice in order to fill the gaps raised in the section of the statement of the problem.

To begin with the theoretical framework, folklore refers to a wide range of ideas. According to Abrams, "Since the mid-nineteenth century, has been the collective name applied to sayings, verbal compositions and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by words of mouth... rather than in written forms" (Abrams; 1999:100).

Regarding the definition of folklore, scholars have not yet reached an agreement. To this end, Thompson cited in Maria Leach (1949:403), notes:

Although the word Folklore is more than a century old, no exact agreement has ever been reached as to its meaning. The common idea present in all folklore is that of traditions, something handed down from one person to another and preserved either by memory or practice rather than written record...

Rather than defining the term in a consistent way scholars focus upon to describe the Folkloric elements and functions. To mention some of them, Richard Waterman cited in Leach (Ibid.) says "Folklore is that art form, comprising various types of stories, proverbs, sayings, spells, songs, incantations, and other formulas, which employs spoken language as its medium."

Likewise, Owomoyela (1979:8-9) uses a categorization method to substantiate the concept of folklore. He has generally classified the material that "makes up folkloric poetry" into different dirges, divinatory texts, praise poetry and songs." Through this categorization, Owomoyela indicated the oral nature of folklore that constitutes the poetic and prosaic elements that reflect the expression of people's attitude, idea, belief, etc.

Similarly, Bascom cited in Dorson (1972: p.21) stressed in the function of folkloric elements in the society. According to him, people validate norms, substantiate the legal decision, sharpen children's mind, and express their hostilities through the folkloric elements of proverbs, riddles and satirical songs.

As it is discussed above, it is clear that, oral poetry is one of the oldest forms of folklore and it is transmitted, memorized and preserved orally. Oral poetry has various songs, recitals and lamentations. Scholars like Ruth Finnegan (1970, 1977), Andrzejewski (1985), Okpewho (1992) and Owomoyela (1979) have discussed that the value of oral poetry especially in the rural area of African communities. According to these scholars the day to day activities of most African rural societies have been reflecting through their oral poetry. And the themes of oral poetry reflect the peoples' way of life in general.

As Gerald Prince (1987:97) stated, theme is "A semantic macro-structural category or frame extractable from distinct textual elements which illustrate it and expressing the more general and abstract entities (ideas, thoughts etc.) that a text or part thereof is about". According to this definition, theme is the central unifying concept of a text. From this definition, it can be conclude that the central unifying concept of the oral poems reflect the societies way of life.



In their books, most of the scholars stressed that oral poetry in African context are used in the description of cultures, the recording of historical events, building traditional value, teaching socialization and norms of the society to the new generation.

Having this common understanding, recent scholars have conceptualized the social base of folklore in general and oral poetry in particular from the perspective of social contexts and performance situations. Respecting this view, Dorson (1983:362) states:

.... the symbolic and expressive forms we call folklore have their primary existence in the action of people, and are rooted in the social and cultural life of the people... We must.... view it contextually, in terms of the individual, socially and cultural factors that give it shape meaning [and] existence...

Similarly, as noted by Dorson (1972: p.24), the young American folklorists like Rogger Abrams, Alan Dundes, Robert Georges, and Kenneth Glodstein have paid much attention to the contextual analysis of folklore. These folklorists focus upon an event in time in which the occasion is performed, and they objected the analysis of the text without considering its context (ibid).

Besides, scholars such as Finnegan (1970, 1977), Dorson (1972), Okpewho (1992) and Brown (1999), emphasize the relevance of performances and social contexts of the poems in order to have a full understanding of the feeling of the society. Finnegan (1977:28-29), notes:

..... a piece of oral literature, to reach its full actualization, must be performed. The text alone cannot constitute the oral poem... Performance.... is not a secondary or peripheral matter, but integral to the identity of the poem has actually realized... an oral poem has no existence or continuity apart from its performance.... [It] is....

more dependent on its social context. For this reason, no discussion of oral poetry can afford to concentrate on the text alone, but must take account of the nature of the audience [and] the context of performance...

The point is that performance involves engagement, audience, emotion; and oral literature (or oral poetry) therefore cannot be fully understood without its audience and social context. Landeg (1989:37) cited in Brown (1999:19) also set out "... in interpreting oral performance, one would wish to pay the closest possible attention to the actual meaning of the poems..." Therefore, performance concentrates upon audience, and the social and cultural significance of the event itself.

The values and the varieties of performances are also discussed by Isidore Okpewho(1992:42) in African Oral Literature. As he indicated, performances differ one from the other based on "age and energy of the performer, the nature of the occasion... and the type of setting". Respecting this point, Finnegan (1970:7), explains "... even within the same culture there may be many styles of performance designed to suit the different literary genres recognizes in the culture." As these scholars said, the type of performance may depend on the nature of the occasions and the types of the genres.

Relating with performance, scholars also discussed about the various occasions and rites of passage in the society that allow the people to recite and perform oral poems.

To mention some of the occasions, working time are the one that people perform oral poetry to motivate their working spirit. They compose poems to encourage themselves as they go through their daily routine, be it working in the fields or even returning home after their activities.

So that under the physical conditions of work, people perform oral poetry for entertainment, to motivate their work spirits and relieve them from boredom (Finnegan, 1977: 218, Andrzejewski; 1985:38, Okpewho; 1992:106).

Okpewho, in his book on African Oral Literature (1992:119) describes the various kinds of occasions and performances in relation with stages of life such as "birth, initiation, marriage, title-taking, and death". During this time, people gather together and sing various songs that have a relation with the occasions. For instance, in the occasion of wedding, for both parties' songs and accompanying actions communicate to them the centrality of sex in marriage.

In the context of death, the people compose songs to express their deep feeling in the sense of sadness and loss. In this case, the funeral ceremonies, the type of poems they compose and the length of time they perform "vary, depending ... on factors such as the age of the deceased, his status in the society, his profession or cult affiliation and son on " (Ibid: p.123).

As it is discussed above, even though the audience and the social contexts are taken into serious consideration to perform oral poetry, scholars also believe the existence of a solitary performance. Regarding this, Finnegan (1977:215), and Okpewho (1992:107) indicated the existence of a solitary performer where there is no audience. Deng (1973:78) cited in Finnegan (1977:215), describes a person may find entertainment in singing to himself while walking along the road or herding in the forest.

Besides, Okpewho (Ibid: p.107) states that cattle songs are a wide spread tradition in rural areas. The farmer composes various songs to express the role of an ox during the time of plowing and even after a hard day's field work with the animals. Okpewho (Ibid) by citing Deng's (1973:99) poem described it as "songs in admiration of cattle, especially the ox, "are often sung in cattle camps..." and even" when the singer is accompanying his Ox" and "the clanging of [its] bell and the blowing of the Ox" provide accompanying music for the words of the song."

Therefore, as the above scholars point out, there are different occasions that allow an individual to reflect on his emotion through oral poetry. A man will sing songs alone in

the forest, in the farming area, or he can compose poems to express his appreciation of his cattle. Similarly, to avoid her tediousness, a woman will compose poems when she is fetching water or grinding crops.

Whatever the type of performance is a group or a solitary one "The history, culture, beliefs and practices of the people are found in the folktales, oral poetry and the various forms of oral literature..." (Fekade; 1998:10). The point is, as many scholars suggested, concentrating to the social contexts and the actual performances are essential to investigate the thoughts and experiences of the people that are reflected through oral poetry.

As Finnegan (1977:29) points out, however, " It is only recently that much interest has been taken in this aspects... there is now a growing awareness that any piece of oral poetry must, to be fully understood, be seen in its context; that it is not a separable thing but a communicative event."

In the Ethiopian context, a good number of researches have been conducted in the area of oral poetry. To begin with the BA theses, Nurhussien Muhamed (1986), has tried to discuss the content of the poems of Azmari around Woreta by classifying them into three genres such as love poetry, praise poetry and heroic recitals. Based on these classification and analysis, Nurhussien has attempted to show the major themes of the poems by taking considerable examples from each genere.

On the other hand, Ambachew Alebachew (1987) has attempted to classify the kinds of marriage in Fogera district and he tried to discuss what "Tawnt" means in general and " Yäsät Tawnt" in particular. By defining these terms, Ambachew has tried to illustrate the themes of the oral poems of "Yäsät" "Tawnt". His analysis focused on how "Tawnts" insult themselves by composing satiric songs on different occasions.

The primary concern of the above researchers is content analysis. Due to this reason, the present thesis has a relation with Nurhussien's and Ambachew's theses. In addition to this,

these works have relations with the present research because of collecting and preserving the oral poems of the same study area.

However, these two researches have not paid much attention to the poems in the context of performance which is the primary concern of the present thesis, to examine themes of the poems. Therefore the present thesis is different from these two researches in terms of contextual analysis as well as in terms of the magnitude of coverage.

Regarding MA theses, Daniel Legesse (1998), Conducted a research under the title " A Thematic Approach to Amharic Oral Poems Associated with the Derg's Red-Terror in Gondar and Gojjam." Daniel attempted to collect and examine the major themes of the Red-Terror inspired oral poems. For the course of analyses, he classified the themes of the poems under three major categories such as physical experience, emotional experience and resistance.

Under the theme of physical experience, he tried to collect and discuss poems that reflect the themes of flogging, mutilation, rape, free measures (Netsa irmija), torture, house to house search and massacres of the Red-Terror both in Gondar and Gojjam.

The themes of the poems that are categorized under the sub-title of emotional experience show the deep sorrow, alienation, hopelessness, fear and anxiety. By analyzing these poems, the writer indicated that, as the Red-Terror became more furious, the community despaired and was discouraged.

Under the themes of resistance, Daniel attempted to discuss poems composed on the themes of express migration and assault. Through these poems, he tried to examine the subject of people started to look for means to avoid the menace when the treat of the Red-Terror reached its peak.

However this research has not paid much attention to the performance situation, probably because the time difference between the Derg's Red-Terror and the time of the research

conducted may create this gap. Therefore, the present thesis differs from Daniel Legess's because it attempts to interpret texts in relation to their social contexts.

On the other hand the following three MA theses have attempted to view oral poems in the context of performance.

To begin with Berhanu Gebeyehu (1998), he discussed Islamic Oral Poetry in Wallo in relation to their social context. The theoretical part of this research provides information about the poets, composition, performance, transmission and classification of Islamic Oral poetry in Wallo. The research also underlines the different occasions of poetry recitals. In the analysis part, Berhanu has paid much attention to examine the contextual meaning of the poems by classifying them in to various genres.

The present research has a relation with Berhanu's research because contextual analysis is the main concern of the two, to examine the themes of the poems. However, the present research has also differences from Berhanu's because of two reasons- the study area and the magnitude of coverage. As the title indicated, Berhanu's investigation is particularly focused on Islamic oral poetry in Wallo. Due to this reason, his collection, classification and analysis of poems do not cover the whole society of the study area.

The other thesis which has relation with the present thesis is the Abbawudde Oral Poetry conducted in South Wallo, by Mesfin Messele (2000), Mesfin made a descriptive analysis of the poems of Abbawudde in terms of the social aspects of performance. In this respect the present thesis has a relation with this one. However, there is still a considerable degree of differences between the two. To mention one difference, Mesfin's thesis focused upon the oral poems of the Abbawudde only, it does not cover the whole society of the study area. Where as the present thesis is not restricted on particular section of the society. The other one is spatial difference. And this spatial difference may have its own influence to vary the type of poems composed by the two societies.

Tesfaye Mesele (2007), Subject Matter Analysis of Amharic Oral Lyric Poetry in Raya is the other thesis which has a relation to the present research. Like the above two theses, Tesfaye has also paid attention to performance situation in his research of Amharic Oral Lyric poetry in Raya. Due to this reason, the present thesis has also a relation with this one. Regarding their difference, as the title suggests, Tesfaye's research has restricted itself only to lyric oral poetry where as the present thesis has not such kind of restriction. In Addition to this, like the above two mentioned theses; the study area is also the other difference of the two.

Moreover, the above three MA theses have paid much attention for generic classification where as the present one is concerned more on thematic analysis.

However, as it can be seen from the above discussion, except Ambachew and Nurhussien Amharic B.A theses, there is no other research conducted in Fogera. Therefore the present thesis is, thus, conducted to fill this gap.

## Chapter Three

### A Thematic Analysis of the Oral Poetry of the People of Fogera

As is the case with other communities, the people of Fogera has multifaceted cultural communication forums such as weddings, religious holidays, funeral ceremonies, agricultural work parties, etc. through which they reflect their wealth of folklore to exhibit their cultural heritages. Based on the collected poems and their analysis, this study makes an attempt to identify the following major themes.

#### 3.1 Hosting guests as a mark of good personality.

For the people of Fogera, the poems chanted during the mourning ceremony, reflect all the virtuous things the deceased accomplished before his demise. Fore instance, during funeral ceremonies, the mournful or plaintive songs chanted by the people of Fogera laude the deceased's personality, wealth and charitableness. Some of them are presented as follows:

1 ስጡኝ እሱን ዋንጫ እምባ እሞለዋለሁ፣

በሞቴ እየተባልኩ ጠጥኜበታለሁ።

Hand me that Goblet, brim it I will fill it with tears,

Beseeched upon my death, drank I had with it.

2 አባይ ደረቀ አሉ ፎገራ ያለው፣

በትለቁ ዋንጫ የሚጠለቀው።

Dry had run, said they, Nile of Fogera,  
That affords a dip with a big goblet.

The aforementioned poems indicate that the departed was a wealthy and charitable person. The first elegiac poem shows a person who made a point of throwing a banquet, where people drink liquors and eat a lavish meal to their hearts' content. When a charitable person passes away, a mourner holding a goblet reminiscent of his charitableness. When a charitable person passes away, a mourner holding the goblet high on the air laments his death reminiscent of his generosity.

On the other hand, when a wealthy but a closefisted person who abstained from helping the needy, feeding the hungry and demonstrating hospitality to guests dies, he wouldn't be mourned. Goblets held as customs bids to a charitable person. In case an opportunist person, eyeing at favor from the relatives of the departed, attempts to stage such an elegiac practice, by standers, who ridicule him outnumber those whose tears he may manage to provoke. Making sure they are not within the radius of the earshot of that of the deceased's relatives, murmuring a bit, they hush him up claiming that what he chants is far from the truth. There is a firm belief among Fogera's community that the elegies chanted during the mourning ceremony must not include issues that wrongly attribute virtues to the deceased, for the sake of winning the favors of his relatives.

The second mourning song given above, besides portraying the bountiful wealth of the departed, creates an analogy with Nile River with regard to the richness of both. The mourner, to show the termination of a show of generosity in that house and convey the enormity of the loss, in his elegy, relates the occasion with the running dry of the Nile River.

### **3.2 Socio-economic status determines the grandeur of funeral ceremony**

Some of the mournful poems chanted to the poor are themewise peculiar from those reserved for the affluent. But this does not mean there is no similarity between the elegy

of the poor and the rich. The difference lies in the colorfulness and grandness of the send off ceremony and the extent of the elegy with praise that touches the charitableness of the wealthy one. Otherwise elegies that focus on social issues other than wealth or the manifestation of wealth are both similar to the have and the have nots.

The plaintive poems below throw light on the outlook of Fogera's people with regard to the funeral of a person from the lower socio-economic layer.

**3. አንች የድሀ ቀበጥ ለምን በሥራ ሞትሽ፤**

**እሁድ አትሞችም ወይ እንደድሀነትሽ።**

You a superfluous fool, why you do pass away, on a working day?

Why don't you choose Sunday, true to your penury?

**4. አልቅሱ እንላቀስ አንድ ድሃ ሙታል፤**

**ሁልጊዜ ያበላ እስከመች ይሞታል።**

Lament, let us lament today, a poor has passed away,

Die never shall one, who honors many with a banquet.

Elegy 3 above shows the presence of a social stratum among the people of Fogera as an indicator of differences of wealth. When a destitute person, lacking a means of subsistence, is smote by grief on a working day or at a time when people get busy in the drudgery of a daily routine to eke out a living, the number of attendants of his burial proves low speaking in relative terms. At times the poor person may die on a weekend, Sunday. On such instance as it is customary for the people of Fogera to go to church and since Sunday is a time for rest, joining mourners they accentuate the burial. A mourner, who frequently observed the discrimination, capitalized the situation in his elegy that hinted a poor person, who wants to lend color to his burial, ought to die on Sunday. The poem hints, it is unreflective of the deceased poor to choose a working day for his burial.

When an affluent person, who was famous for inviting all to nourish and bout at his house, passes away people despite the daily routine they are supposed to discharge, whether it is a holiday or not, converge at the bereaved house, to add color to the funeral procession.

On the other hand, the 4th poem above is one that shows the unfairness of the discrimination discussed above. The two contrasting poems show how the people of Fogera resolve, social ills through self appraisal.

Fogera is a melting pot of people of its environs, new comers and residents. Fogera is for all not for its founders only. The people of Fogera never show a tendency of isolating newcomers, be it in the hour of trial or jubilation. As long as they restrain from untoward behavior, new comers could easily integrate with the people of Fogera.

In case if a newcomer passes away at Fogera, far from his home of origin, elegiac songs will be chanted for him. The themes of the poems depicted below indicate the attitude of the people of Fogera to the new comers' social life.

**5. ሰው ይህዳል እንጂ ከመወደቁያው ድረስ፣  
አፈር መኝ ይመጣል ተጭኖ በፈረስ።**

Man treks towards his falling earth,  
But never comes earth laden on horse.

**6. ኑሮ በሰው አገረ ሞት ባገር ይደምቃል፣  
ያም መጥቶ ያም መጥቶ ካንገት ላይ ይወድቃል።**

Colorful is life far away from home, while death at home,  
As all and sundry cries on the bereaved's neck

Elegy 5 shows the death of a new comer in Fogera, far from his area of origin. People of the locality have a firm belief that mankind could know his birth place but can't foresee his burial place, as that is only for God to decide. On the first line of this elegy the mourner has reflected this belief of his. Reinforcing this assertion, the second line of the elegy shows that if a person passes away while in search of daily bread far from home, he may not get a chance to rest on the same soil where his umbilical cord is buried.

Similarly, the first line of elegy 6 contrasts the merit and demerit of living and dying away from area of origin. The mourner contrasting the two shows, living far away from place of origin affords one a chance to engage in any kind of menial jobs while a burial will be best if conducted in the person's area of origin, for many could attend the ceremony.

This elegy reflect that among the people of Fogera, stooping to menial jobs is a kiss of death as a scorn for low paying menial jobs is deeply entrenched. It shows, they shy away from such jobs thinking that it could taint the pride of the employee and that of his relatives. The saying underpins their belief that it is better for a person to stoop to menial jobs, where he is a complete stranger than where people keep a keen eye on him.

The second line of the elegy on the other hand shows that, if a person dies, while in pursuit of daily bread far from home, he couldn't get genuine mourners like relatives and close friends and neighbors, who could shed tears locking their hands neck to neck and accentuating the event.

### **3.3 Reflection on the Loss of Someone Relied on**

Though the people of that community abide by a peaceful co-existence he, who has a higher influential father and brother will be respected more. And also if in the district there happens to be a renowned hero, he plays quite a role in commanding a respect to the locality. Elegies in the same wave length are presented below:

7. ኸረተው ባላገር አታንገራግረኝ፤  
እንደተኙ ሚደርስ አባት ነበረኝ።

Please provincial lad, provoke me not,  
I too had a father that descend,  
at the break of dawn, while people still in bed.

8. ባጥፈው ደነዘዘኝ ምላሴን እንደእግር፤  
ለካስ ወንድም ኑሯል የልብ የሚያናግር።

Chilled got my tongue, when I folded it like a leg,  
Alas, it was a brother that affords one a thicket to speak as one feels like.

9. ወንድም ተገንዞ ሲወጣ ተራራ፤  
የዚህ ጊዜ አይደለ ጠላት የሚኮራ።

When a brother mounts a mountain, wrapped in a shroud,  
Is that not when feels an enemy proud?

10. ከራቱ እንዳንበሳ ሲቆጣ እንደነብር፤  
ቀረ መከታዬ ገብቶ ከምድር።

A lion's pride and angry of a tiger,  
My protectorate left for good, to earth committed.

11. ደህና ገብዝ ሲሞት ሳቀ ጅልጅሉ ሰው፤  
የታገተ ጥጃ የማያሥመልሰው።

Over the demise of a hero laughed the fool,  
Who fights back not a calf held in ransom.

Elegy 7 shows that a father is a person indeed in the time of need. In the time of conflict that erupt between a husband and a wife, a father is one who stands by the side of his daughter to avert any violation of her rights.

If the marriage is repairable, together with relatives of his son-in-law he settles the case, otherwise for fear his daughter will face damage, he will see to the divorce via elders or the rule of law. He also double checks his daughter has got her share in the division of property. That is why when such a father passes away, especially his daughter painting in her mind the violation of her rights she could suffer in the absence of her father, who serves her a right arm, she wails nonstop.

Elegies 8 and 9 are of the type that describes a brother as a guardian. The first line of mourning song 8 hints a person who used to talk as he feels like, saying what could possibly others bring, begins to exercise caution upon the death of a brother. As clearly put in line two of the same elegy, the reason for starting to watch one's tongue lies in the death of a brother, who serves as a shield against attacks.

Similarly the phrase on elegy 9 shows how one who has just lost a brother, a defender, harbor an apprehension that his sworn enemies, who wants to take even or seeking a tie, could kill him even before his brother's body is committed to earth.

As indicated on the first line of elegy 10 the mourner compares the deceased's pride with that of a lion. And his fury with that of a tiger. In so portraying the dead, the mourner passes across the message that the dead was one who had an aura of invincibility and feared by many, as a result of which his kith and keens too are revered.

This way the mourner has showed the bitterness of his grief. Elegy 11 shows that the loss the death of a hero brings forth is not confined to his relatives. Residents of the locality sense the loss. A hero is one who fights in defense of the locality and tracks down a "Shifta", who looting the property of the residents of the area, runs away. If the "Shifta" is not caught on the first day, together with residents of the locality, mounting a crack

down he compels the "Shifta" to return the looted property. Such an act is a manifestation of bravery.

Though such a hero wins popular acclaim, some who feel jealous or who fail to grasp the loss covertly enjoy the demise of the hero. That is what the first line of the elegy indicates. The second line on the other hand ridicules and belittles the cowardice, which delight over the death of a hero, labeling them as one who couldn't fight back even a calf held in ransom by a "Shifta."

### 3.4 The death of a young considered as a tragic incidence

When a youngster is cut short in the flower of his boyhood or when a bride due to be wed passes away, a special elegy that laments their tragic end is chanted for them as follows.

12. እንደዚህ ላለነው ማልቀስ የሚገባ፤

እወጣ እወጣ ሲል ጮርቃው ሲቀነባ።

It is to the likes of this, which it is fit to weep for,  
While to shoot up, the embryo is nipped in the bud.

13. እረቀስ እረቀስ ምን ያስቸኩልሃል፤

እንዳይመሽብህም ማልደህ ተነስተሃል።

Please slow down, slow down please,  
Why should you make haste?  
As you had risen early lest on you the sun set.

14. ዳሱ ሳይሰራ ጊዜው መሽመሽ፤

ጠላው ሳይጠመቅ ጊዜው መሽመሽ፤

ወጡ ሳይሰራ ጊዜው መሽመሽ፤

እረገኝ አንቺ ልጅ ሰርጉ ተበላሽ።

Before getting erected the tent, it turned dark,  
Before brewed got the local beer, it turned dark,  
Before the soup got cooked, it turned dark,  
Alas, you lass, the wedding turned stark.

15. ስጧት መስታወቷን አታስቀሩባት፣  
አከላቷ ሲፈርስ የምታይበት።

Hand her over her mirror, hold it back not,  
When decays her body, she could see it.

The mournful poem specified in number 12, creating a metaphor laments the one cut in the flower of his boyhood with a fledgling shoot nipped in the bud. Parents and relative usually have great hope on their youngsters. When youngsters cross the river of death unexpectedly, parents sorrow and grief proves deep. This is exactly what is underlined in the first line of elegy 12 that reads "it is to the likes of this that it is fit to weep..." This phrase has a connotative meaning that the death of a fledgling is more heart rending than that of an elder's death. For the elder had passed through all seasons of life.

Also in elegy 13 the youngster's early death is likened to the setting of the sun. Similarly the mournful song marked in 14 shows, the cutting short of a girl, who has just reached a marriageable age, before enjoying the ecstasy of a wedding and a marital bliss. In each line of elegy 14 the phrase "it turned dark", "it turned dark" put in exactly parallel position and meant for aesthetic and emphatic effects indicating the demise of the girl in early age. Also the enumeration of activities before the tent is erected, before the local beer is brewed, before the soup is prepared shows the passing away of the girl before she joined the ranks of those who tied the knot.

Elegy 15 in its part depicts the tendency of the youth to beautify themselves their face before a mirror, with cosmetic kit. As one of the informant explained, if a girl at the height of her virginal beauty and attracting the attention of suitors gets busy beautifying

herself, they will leave her alone, claiming it is her time. So when young girls die, their addiction to mirror will be expressed along with a reminiscence of their beauty. However if a young boy is of the temperament staring at a mirror he will be considered sissy or hoary. If a lady in wedlock is of the tendency of staying too much before a mirror, her husband could suspect her of infidelity.

### 3.5 Poems as a way of expressing grievances

At times on funeral ceremony people get an opportune moment to express grievances, complaints or even hurl satiric remarks to attack someone around. The elegiac poem below depicts the satiric remark sister of the deceased hurled at the bereaved wife.

16. እኛ እናልቅስ እንጂ እህት ወንድሞቹ፣  
እሷ ታገባለች ከባልንጆሮቹ።

Let us wail, we siblings of the dead,  
Amongst his friends' she will certainly wed.

According to informants, such a sarcastic remark is thrown from the suspicion that the bereaved wife may get married again, or hearing male mourners discussing with hushed up voice about her beauty or even from the way she acts. This way the sister of the deceased hurls a verbal attack at her sister-in-law and give vent to her resentment. She said so, out of her belief that it is only relatives of the dead that the sore trial stroke hard, for the wife of the departed could marry one of his friends. With a lightening quick witticism the bereaved wife responds as follows:

17. ምን ያለች ክፉ ናት መስቃ ተናጋሪ፣  
ባልሽ ይመትና እንደኔ ተዳሪ።

What a glib tongued virago is she?

Let your husband die, and get married like me.

This way wishing her a similar fate, the bereaved wife shows her sister-in-law how wrong she was in assuming so. Such sarcastic poems indicate how the people of Fogera reflect their grievances themselves. They as well tell on the lightening quick witticism of the people and their astonishing ability in creative art.

### 3.6 The death of a husband or a wife causes to family disorder

The poem below indicates how unbearable the loss of a husband is to a wife:

18. ያባት ሞት ካፊያ ነው፣  
የእናት ሞት ዝናብ ነው፣  
የባል ሞት በረዶ፣  
ቀብረው ሲመለሱ ቤት ይሆናል ባዶ።

The death of a father is a shower,  
The death of a mother is a downpour,  
The death of a husband rain, ice laden,  
After burial the house turns void.

The mournful song above, comparatively putting the enormity of the blow when a father, a mother and a husband dies, it likens it with a light rain, a heavy shower and an ice laden ferocious rain respectively. This contrasting poem hints that the death of a husband is portrayed via the turning void of a house upon the loss of a family head.

Moreover the bereaved finds her situation hard to bear when she reflects on the disrespect people of Fogera have for a widow, who is suspected of sleeping with the husbands of others. Her bleak chance for a second marriage also makes her situation hard.

Among the elegiac poems chanted, when a female dies, are found among those that amplify the work load she shouldered while alive.

19. ጸረ አይዋ እገሌ ታጠቃት ነበር ዛሬስ አጠቃችሁ፣  
ደሞ ብላ ብላ ልጅ እዘል አለችሁ።

Alas Mr. X you used to attack her,  
But now she attacked you,  
To care for a child she ordered you.

In Fogera a wife sees to all the domestic work while a husband labors outside to eke out a living. It shows that the relationship between a husband and wife is like a master subordinate one. The husband is commanding and the wife abiding. The mournful poem drives home the responsibility of looking after the baby is left for the bereaved husband, as his wife is no more there.

### 3.7 Give response to the period, God or nature by condemning bad occurrences

Sometimes via their mournful songs the people of Fogera reflect the ugliness of the period. The poems below magnify this fact.

20. ምን ያለ ዘመን ነው እሳተ ገለባ፣  
የታመመው አይድን የወጣው አይገባ።

What an era of a chaff fire  
Those who fall sick never recover  
While those set out, never return.

21. በስምንተኛው ሺ ሰሌን ተወደደ፣  
ትልቁም ትንሹም ለብሶት እየሄደ።

In Armageddon got expensive a palmate shroud,  
As the elderly and young alike, go with it donned.

The two poems above show bloodshed had reigned greatly at that time. As indicated on poem 20, the person has metaphorically expressed a larger death toll with a chaff fire. It draws attention to the fact that the recurrence of death is claiming a larger toll as the gutting down by fire of chaff.

Poem number 21 has some similarity with the one immediately above it. It shows the turning costly of the covering cloth a shroud made from a palmate used for rolling over the dead before burial, owing to the mounting of the number of people who breath their last. According to the custom of the people of Fogera as Armageddon is considered a time when the numbers of people who drop dead escalate, this poem indicates the coming closer of Armageddon as people are fast dying.

Some of the elegiac poems on the other hand reflect the outlook of the people of Fogera to God or nature .Poems put below highlights this fact.

22. እንደግዚያቤሌ ክፉ እንደመሬት ሆዳም፣  
ሌባ እንኳን አራስ ላም ከበረት አይነዳም።

Cruel as God, gluttonous as earth,  
Even a thief steals not a lactating cow.

23. እግዚአብሔር በአንድ ነገር አይጠረጠርም፣  
የተከፋ ሞቶ ደስ ያለው አይቀርም።

Of one thing, God isn't suspected,  
Lives not for ever the happy, while the grieved dead.

The elegy put on number 22 shows the cruelty of God and the gluttony of earth. There is a saying among the people of Fogera even a thief who is taken by the community a scoundrel or an immoral person, harbors pity to a lactating cow. He leaves it behind when he drives the cattle away. Taking this into account, when a lactating mother passes away leaving behind a child, the bereaved incriminates God of cruelty for separating a baby and its mother.

On the other hand, they chant that though God is cruel, he is nevertheless impartial. Elegy 23 is meant for a person who was saddened and unhappy in life. This elegy casts light on the fact that death, the great equalizer, awaits (is the fate of) those who were responsible for the grievance of the dead. This they say shows God's fairness in judgment

### **3.8 Failure to attend funeral ceremony weakening the social bonds**

Incase a member of the community fail to hear the bad news or fail to sick or happens not to attend the mourning ceremony for unforeseen reasons, the absentee has to see to it that he/she attends a special mourning event slated to be held for relatives living in remote areas and people late informed about the terrible grief that has come upon the bereaved.

Unfortunately if the absentee once more fails to attend the special mourning event supplying a sound reason for his absence, he has to condole with the bereaved to spare him the labeling of the negligent. Otherwise, as a bitter trial strikes across the board, the absentee will be paid in kind when smote by a similar grief. "It is not a donkey that I buried but a human being a flesh of my flesh" the bereaved will say.

The vengeful activity of shunning the absentee is not solely confined to paying him in kind during trial but also it is manifested in the form of disrupting the exchange of greetings in the name of God. Commenting on the seriousness of the case, elders of the

Fogera vicinity related that a trial is testing, failure to attend to the traditional practice of which results in the weakening of social bonds. The themes of the following poems reflect these circumstances:

24. መከራ ክፋ ነው ሰው ያቆራርጣል፣  
አልቅሶ ክፋ ነው ሰው ያቆራርጣል፣  
አንግዲያ ሚችማ መች ተመልሶ ይመጣል።

A sore trial is a serious thing,  
It creates a rift among people,  
Mourning is a serious thing,  
It creates a grievance among people,  
Alas the deceased never comeback again.

25. ነጭ በነጭ ለብሶ ዳር ለዳር ቢዞሩ፣  
ከመሃል ያስገባል መከራ ደፋሩ።

Strolling on the verge, donning white,  
Trial draws one in the circle.

26. አልቅሱ አንላቀስ ወንፈል ነው፣  
ዛሬ የኛ ቢሆን ነገ የአናንተ ነው።

Lament let us lament, it is a debt,  
Today is ours tomorrow is yours.

Elegy 24 shows absenting oneself from burial ceremony brings forth marginalization or social discrimination on the absentee. During funeral procession the bereaved with a cursory glance checks as to who attended the ceremony and as to who failed to do so.

If some one fails to condole with them, in their hour of trial, the people of Fogera will pay him/her in kind when he/she is in grief. Failure to attend a burial is a conspicuous factor for the weakening of social relationships.

Appraisal and criticism are commonplace in Funeral procession, an occasion that brings people together. Elegy 25 shows while attending the lamentation of the dead one ought not to be bystanders. In Fogera, during burial relatives of the dead and close friends are bound to come into the heart of the throng and making a circle display the depth of their grief as custom bids. This way they lend life to the burial event. Symphsizers at the outer circle are expected to echo the elegy chanted by the bereaved, unless they do so as death is impartial, they must not expect a similar event when they lose somebody dear to them.

On the other hand elegy 26 depicts that crying at other's burial ceremony is considered a debt for one doing so, for the bereaved owes him/her gratitude to be paid later. I share your bitter trial he has to say for he will be paid in kind. That is why, cognizant tomorrow they will face a sore trial, and the people of Fogera lend color to the burial of residents of their locality.

### **3.9 The ox as a symbol of economic security**

Some oral poems reflect the value of the ox for the farmer's economic activity. While threshing is on progress, it is the lexis ox that takes the leading part. It guides the rest how they could thresh the pile of crop circling it round and round at the same time trampling on it. As it is well experienced the farmers call the lexis ox "kelash", which means pointer.

During threshing, the farmer praises the oxen through songs and order them to turn around, all starting from the experienced one that takes the lead down to the ones that follow suit turn around. They unstintingly turn round and round. When the song is disrupted they decelerate their activities and start to fight each other. Without a praising

song chanted to them they turn unruly. Even with a whiplash it is not possible to get them in order. As informants explained the song leads the oxen a spirit of dynamism.

As informants said, if the lexis ox fails to turn around when it is expected to make a circle, the farmers order him through songs to round and make a circle. As though they communicate very well, it turns around. The work songs chanted during this occasion mainly comprise songs that praise the oxen. Such songs are presented below:

**27. በሬ ያላንተማ ጎኔ ያላንተማ፣**

**አይጣል አውድማ አይሰራም ማማ።**

Ox without you, my allay without you,  
There is no making a threshing square,  
Nor erecting a watch tower.

**28. ሆ በሬ ሆ በሬ በሬ ምኑ ክፋ፣**

**ከማጀት ሲገቡ ይገኛል ድፍ ድፋ፣**

**በጓሮ ሲሄዱ ይገኛል ጥፍ ጥፋ፣**

**ካልጋ ላይ ሲወጡ ይገኛል ምንጣፋ።**

Move it ox, move it,  
Yours is useless no part,  
A brewing traditional beer,  
Home, when one gets inside,  
Manures when one heads to the backyard,  
When one gets into bed a hide,  
As a mattress spread.

**29. በርዬ አንተን ያጡ፣**

**ከማህበር ወጡ፣**

**ከዱለቱም ታጡ፣**

**ዙረው ተለወጡ።**

Ox, those devoid of you,  
Ousted from circles,  
They were no where in festivities,  
Also; turned they subordinates.

30. በሬ ያላንተስ፣

ቁሱም አይቀድስ፣

ንጉስም አይነገስ፣

Ox without you,  
The priest couldn't say mass,  
The enthronement of a king couldn't take place.

31. እኔና በርዬ የሰራነው ቤት፣

ቢገፋት አይወድቅ ቢነቀንቁት።

The house I and my ox built,  
Couldn't fall apart,  
A shake or a push if dealt.

The themes of these poems underline the economic significance farmer's accord to their oxen. As clearly indicated on poem 27, as the farmer very well knows a harvest is quite unthinkable without the active role of his ox, giving it different pet names he sings to it "who is there for me without you?" The second line also indicates if there is no ox, there is no harvest, which means there is no subsistence.

Poem 28 above enumerates the multifaceted significance of the ox. It attributes the locally brewed beer, the manure used for fuel and the hide farmer's spread underneath their blanket as a mattress, to the usefulness of the ox while still alive and even then after. It shows nothing of the ox goes waste when alive or dead.

The work song labeled 29 on the other hand shows the marginalization of the poor from social interaction, for not affording to have an ox. In Fogera organizing feasts turn by turn during different religious festivities, is a common practice. That is why a farmer, devoid of an ox, is naturally ostracized by his friends as he couldn't afford to challenge of host similar events during his turn.

Poem 30 indicates, let alone a farmer's house, the sustainability of religious institutions as well as a royal state, without the role the farmer and his ox play, falls under a question mark. Unless the farmer supplies grain to the church to be distributed as a payment for service among priests, who say mass, the priests could not run their families. It as well hints even the government couldn't collect taxes from farmers.

Poem 31 shows a farmer who has a strong ox salts away some grain and money for a rainy day, in order when hard pressed by financial problem or drought he could easily circumvent it. Relating the reason behind his economic wellbeing, he ascribed his success to his and his ox's joint effort.

### 3.10 Reflecting the bond between the ox and a farmer

Some of the poems given below hint at the strong bond between a farmer and his ox:

32. ኧረ በሬና እኔ እንሄድ ምናኔ፣  
በሌለበት አገር ሞትና ከኔ።

Alas, ox and me let us go and live hermit like,  
Where there is no death and retribution alike.

33. ኧረ በሬ አለሙ ኧረ በሬ አለሙ፣  
የተሠራሀበት ምንድን ነው ቀለሙ።

Oh, ox, everything,  
Oh, ox, everything,

What is the spectrum,  
You are composed of.

34. በሬና ገበሬ ቢጣሉም አይበጅ፣  
እንዲያው ሰተት ብሎ ይጠመዳል እንጅ።

It doesn't work,  
If a farmer and his ox get quarreled,  
But the ox, of its volition, does take,  
Its neck to the yoke.

35. የበሬንስ እናት አውሏት ከቤት፣  
አጠጧት አጓት፣  
የነመቻል እናት ትሁን እመቤት።

Let mother of the ox,  
Stay back at home,  
Pump her whey,  
Let mother of "Machale", be Madame.

The deep love the farmer entertains towards his ox is expressed via his wish, natural laws annulled to live with his ox forever, their fate intertwined. This is expressed in poem 32. Though he is well aware death is an unavoidable tragic fate for all, to express his inexplicable deep love for his ox, he sings for a wonderland where death couldn't part him from his ox.

Out of his unwavering love for his ox, taking into account its helpfulness the farmers ponder the nature of the ox as indicated in poem 33. He wonders "what are the hues of the ingredients the ox is composed of?" Calling it with a pet name "My world" as though it were a human being, he confides to it, it is on it, his blood line heavily hinges on.

In poem 34 the poet has clearly showed a farmer and his ox will never ever quarrel. It as well shows nothing should stand between their loves. It rather shows, the ox is an ally to the farmer, an ally that doesn't fail the farmer. When ever the farmer feels like putting a yoke on its neck, with out creating any problem, the ox abides by his master's wish. The ox is his close life partner and the core of his existence. In line with this, the farmer also records a word of praise to the cow that gave birth to his ox.

Poem 35 indicates that the cow too deserves love and honor. He requests people to pay due respect to the cow that begot his ox. The farmer also gives her a title, meant for a lady. He calls it Madame to be, "Tehun Emebet"

### 3.11 Hard work is the source of wealth

It is the wont of people of Fogera to chant elegiac poems to encourage a hard worker and to disgrace farmers who are poor in farming. Poems of this nature as examples are provided below:

36. የኮልባ ጌታ ወረደ ማልዶ፣  
በረጅም ዋንጫ ኮረፌ ለምዶ።

Lord of the brunette ox,  
Went down hill at sun up,  
Wont of "korefe" with a large goblet.

37. የገበሬ ልጅ ስመ ገበሬ፣  
አሁን ይገኛል ጠላ በሐምሌ።

A farmer's son, like father like son,  
Could one get a traditional  
Local beer in 'Hamle',

38. ማሳው ሰፋሬ በሬው ደንሳ፣  
ዘንዶ ሚመስል አምራች ዳጉሳ።

The farmland vast,  
The ox fattened,  
That grows millet,  
That looks like an Tycoon

Poem 36 shows how a farmer works with stamina, lest he runs out of the local beer he drinks at home. Feeling proud of his ox that helped him keep his store full, calling himself with a pet name lord of the brunette "Yekolba Geta" he praises him in his chants. By way of a self praise he also lauds his activities.

Poem 37 shows like father like son, the farmer and his sons are famous known in farming. The second line of the poem indicates even in winter (Hamle), a time when farmers usually get constrained by a grain shortage, a home brewed beer abounds at a hard working farmer's house. Usually as the crops harvested during summer get exhausted when winter sets in and since the new crop doesn't become ripe, a farmer that relaxedly spends winter and still who presents crop for sell at this gruesome moment is considered wealthy.

Similarly, poem 38 shows that the farmer under discussion is a successful person in his farming activity. The poem painting the farmer's dexterity and the vastness of the farming land capitalizes the success the coupling of the two elements creates. An able farmer praises his ox and himself. That is why on the second line he likened the quality of the crop with that of a Tycoon.

There are also verses which remained the persons to work very hard instead of sitting idle because of doing something which is shame.

39. ማረስ ነው እንጂ እጅ እስኪቆስል፣  
ስርቆት ምንድን ነው ውሻ ይመሥል።

Better plowing, sore till gets hand,  
As if a dog, steal why should one need?

40. ማረስ ነው እንጂ እጅ እስኪመለጥ፣  
ያሳፍር የለም ወይ ሞሰብ ሲገለጥ።

Better plowing till one's skin is shed off,  
Doesn't it shameful when ran empty the bread basket?

Poem 39 shows that a lazy farmer who finds himself in a worse situation, will be tempted to steal. That is why farmers of Fogera opt to belittle and condemn a lazy farmer. A dog is taken as one that has lost its honor, as it wags its tails for the sake of getting leftovers. In Fogera it is common to create an analogy between a dog and a lazy person.

As work song 40 indicates, a farmer, who fails to work hard, gets ashamed when relatives and friends drop at his house, since he will have nothing to offer. To spare oneself from such a disgraceful event, the poem indicates it is necessary to unstintingly labor.

41. እኔ የለኝም የሌባ ወዳጅ፣  
እኔ የለኝም የሌባ ወዳጅ፣  
ከሌባ ጋር ከዋልኩኝማ፣  
መሆኔ አይደለ የኑግ አውድማ፣  
የኑግ አውድማ ጠላ የለው፣  
በአንድ ቅል ውሃ ከፍ ከፍ ነው፣  
የሌባም አዳሩ እንደዛው ነው፣  
የሞተ ለታ በሁለት እነጨት ወስዶ መቅበር ነው።

I have no friend, who is a thief,  
 I have no partners, who are thieves,  
 If I accompany the thief,  
 I would be but a bare land,  
 On which Niger seed harvests is threshed,  
 And when Niger seed is threshed on the bare land,  
 No "tella" is served to (the passers-by),  
 But only a gourd of water is offered,  
 And the life of a thief is similar to this,  
 And when he dies, on double wooden bars,  
 He is taken to his grave.

42. ሸማኔ ሆኖ ጥበብ ካልሰሩ፣  
 መምህር ሆኖ ካላስተማሩ፣  
 ካህናት ሆኖ ቅኔ ካልመሩ፣  
 ገበሬ ሆኖ ነጭ ካልዘሩ፣  
 ሰው ያለስራው የማይነሳው፣  
 ሰው ያልስራው ብናነሳው፣  
 ይታዘበናል የቆመው ሰው።

As a weaver if can't make embroidery,  
 And as a teacher, if can't teach clearly,  
 And as a priest, can't lead the hymn chores,  
 And as a farmer can't sow white teff,  
 One can't be praised for no good deeds,  
 And if we praise one otherwise,  
 The living will hold us in contempt,

The oral poem number 41 indicated that the person has not any relation with thieves and it advises that robbery is shameful deed. The poem tries to compare and contrast the life of a thief with that of Niger seed harvest. A threshing of Niger seed does not take too much time and tella and food is not served to the passers by at a time of threshing. And

the verse tells that the funeral ceremony of the thief would not take time similar to the threshing process of Niger seed.

Similarly, the verse in number 42 listed various job fields indicated that one should be a hard worker in his field of study. And if not, it is not necessary to praise for no good deeds. This reminds to motivate for doing his work seriously.

### 3.12 Fighting in the battle field is considered as a mark of bravery

During funeral ceremony person knowing heroic poems would recite various poems wondering here and there catching a gun among the mourner around .And mourner around him would respond saying "it is real" and "he has been kind" for the poems and the person's deeds respectively .

For instance, the themes of some of the following heroic poems reflect courage, feeling of heroism and shooting techniques.

#### 43. ዘራፍ ትቢቱ፣

ልቡ ድፍን ነው እንደ ጥይቱ፣  
ዘራፍ ቱማታ፣  
ራስ ይመታል እንደበሽታ።

"Zeraf," he exclaims,  
Hard, hearted as a bullet,  
"Zeraf," amidst pandemonium,  
Knocks down one's head as epilepsy.

#### 44. ጀቱ በሰማይ ጭል ጭል ሲል፣

ታንኩ በምድር ጉንዳን ሲመስል፣  
አምሳ ሰው ገዳይ ከግድቡ ስር።

When the jet- planes flicker in the sky,  
And the tanks crawl over the ground,  
He kills fifty men at the foot of the dam.

45. የጆግና ወንድም ያበደ ውሻ፣  
እርሳስ ይለቅማል ከሰው ትክሻ።

A rapid dog, brother of the heroes,  
Sweeps clear bullets from the shoulders of other people.

46. አያምርበትም ወንድ ልጅ ሲያፍር፣  
ጠላት ሲመጣ ከማጀት ቅርቅር።

Not fit for a man to be shy,  
And to hide in the kitchen,  
At the appearance of the enemy.

47. ጉበዝ ሲመክት ውርደትን ፈርቶ፣  
ይነሳል እንጂ አይቀርም ሙቶ።

When the hero defends to fend off shame,  
He never dies, in stead rises again.

48. ልጅ ካልያዘው ያባቱን ጋሻ፣  
ስጧት ለሚስቱ ለመቆስቆሻ።

If the son can't hold his father's shield,  
Give it to his wife for fire-woods.

A heroic poem mentioned in 43 indicated that the person is courageous and shooter. The last verse of the poem showed that the person is the most stickers knocking down one's head with bullets. The pandemic disease known as "beshita" has been known that, the

person suffering from this disease would not be cured easily and therefore, knocking down the head is the last measure which would not be repeated.

The poem indicated in number 44 praises the time of the courageous person spent in the war field .The lyric depicted that the bravery of the "Zemach" who has killed the multitude number of enemies without fearing the flickering jet plane in the sky and the tanks crawling over the ground.

Similarly poem 45 showed how many bullets he could take from the enemy's body.

Poem 46 indicates that courage should be the typical character of a man and shyness does not fit him. A man who retreats and surrenders at the appearance of enemies would be despised by the people. The underestimation has been mentioned in relation with kitchen. According to the culture of Fogera, kitchen is the place where females hide themselves .Males would not enter in the kitchen. It is really shameful that for a man to be there. The husband would not get into the kitchen following his wife even if he wants to kick her because of their quarrel with each other.

A heroic poem listed above in number 47 indicated that a person who has lost his life fighting neck-to-neck with his enemy and put some sort of memorial articles above his grave not to be forgotten by the people around. However, poem 48 showed that a son who becomes shy and fear his enemy and become not brave as his father would be laughed at by the whole village.

### **3.13 Strong stand for justice as the reflection of good personality**

Some of the themes of the recited verses reflect the deceased's strong stand for justice, eloquence of speech, and his outstanding counseling performance while he was alive. The following heroic recitals showed the above points:

49. ለቤተዘመድ ምክሩን ሲለግስ፣  
 የሚጣፍጠው እንደ ጮማ ጥብስ፣  
 የተማረ ነው ሁሉን የሚያውቅ፣  
 የተናገረው አንዱ ማይወድቅ፣  
 ካፉ ማር አለው ካነጋገር፣  
 ሀሰትም አይደል ያውቃል አገር።

When giving advice to kin and kith,  
 He is sweet as roasted white meat,  
 Intellectual he is, knows everything,  
 Never spoke a word of vanity,  
 His mouth is sweet, and swet are his words,  
 And truly speaking, his fame rocks the whole village.

50. የህግ አቋቋም የቸገራችሁ፣  
 ጀግናው ወንድሜ ያንብብላችሁ።

Those who are baffled to read the law,  
 Let my courageous brother read for you.

Poem 49 high lights that the dead person was an eloquent speaker. And therefore, the first two lines of the poem indicated that the persons' pieces of advice were how important it was the sweetness of his mouse and words. And this has been resembled with roasted white meat. The 3rd and the 4th lines of the verse up held the dead man was intellectual and therefore this speech was too much eloquent.

The last two lines of the verse in general showed that the person never speaks a word of vanish rather he spoke humble words and therefore this truth is known over the whole village.

Moreover, Verses wouldn't only be recited for plowing and shouting but also knowing legal system and discipline make the person brave. Poem recited in number 50 stressed this fact.

### 3.14 Poems reflecting the major economic activity

The people of Fogera are transforming their culture from cattle fattening to rice farming. The following poems reflect this shift in economic activity:

51. ጋይንት ተወልጄ ፎገራ ልሙት፣  
ከዚያ ከለስላሳው ከሩዙ መሬት።

Born in Gaynet, let me die in Fogera,  
On that soft land, meant for a rice harvest.

52. እኔሥ እበላለሁ ሩዝ እንጅራዮን፣  
አገራ ፎገራ ያመረተውን።

As for me, I eat flat bread made of rice,  
My country Fogera produced.

53. ገበሬው ደስ አለው እንጅቱም ራስ፣  
በፎገራ ሜዳ ሩዙን አፈሰ።

The farmer becomes happy, got his desires satisfied,  
Amassed he also a rice harvest from Fogera's land.

All the poems indicate Fogera is a rice growing country. In poem 51 expressing his wish the farmer poet prefers Gayent to his birth place and Fogera to a burial place. As informants recall when the Derg regime took power a rebel from Gayent named Admasu Belay, together with his followers, taking to the forest had bravely fought with Derg soldiers. Reminiscent of this bravery, the farmer poet above preferred Gayenet for a birth

places. He indicates; he likes to be born in Gayent, a land of dare devils, nevertheless he on the second line prefers Fogra for a burial place as claiming its fertility.

Poem 52, besides showing flat bread made of rice is becoming a stable food in Fogera, it shows how people feel proud of the home grown rice.

Poem 53 in its part commenting on the flat landscape of Fogera hints how farmers of Fogera lead a blissful life gratified by the bumper rice harvest they get.

Due to this reason, the people praise their surrounding to express its fertility by comparing the product of rice with gold.

**54. ቁሃር ሚካኤል ላይ ወድቄ ብነሳ፣**

**ሻጋ ማሪያም ላይ ወድቄ ብነሳ፣**

**ጉማራ ወንዝ ዳር ወድቄ ብነሳ፣**

**የሰራ አከላቴ ወርቅ ይዞ ተነሳ።**

On Kuher Micheal when I fell and rose,  
On Shega Mariam when I fell and rose,  
On the bank of Gumara River when I fell and rose,  
My body gilded Gold all over.

Kuhar Micheal and Shega Mariam are two neighboring Sub-districts of Fogera while Gumara is a tributary river of the Tana Lake that crosses Fogera. What the content of the poem discusses is Fogera's fertile land which ever way it is approached. It also shows laboring on Fogera's soil pays as the soil is fertile.

### 3.15 Poems showing homesickness and pride to their surrounding

Owing to its being a land of bounty and plenty, when an inhabitant of Fogera leaves Fogera for various reasons, he will for sure suffer from homesickness. The poems below relate this fact:

55. እንዴትነሽ ፎገራ ያገር ሁሉ አንድያ፣  
ይዘውሽ አይዘሩ አይጭኑሽ ባህያ።

How are you Fogera, of all countries that takes the 1<sup>st</sup> rank,  
One couldn't wander with you, around nor carry you on a donkey's back.

56. ዓመት ሁለት ዓመት አንድ ወር እንኳ አልሞላ፣  
አሁን ለምን ጊዜው ትዝ አለኝ ፎገራ።

A year, couple of years, not even a month has elapsed,  
How then I pine for Fogera, I troubled.

57. ከሰው አገር ሄዶ ጠላ ከመጠጣት፣  
ደስ ይላል ፎገራ የሚዳውም ስፋት።

Than drinking a local beer at a land distant,  
Better to feast one's eye on Fogera's field vast.

Poem 55 shows the farmer that sang, so out of his deep love, puts Fogera as a land that out smart all. If possible he also hints it is his wish to carry around his land on a donkey's back.

Poem 56 shows, a person who adapted himself to Fogera, if he goes far from home, homesickness couldn't give him rest. Similarly poem 57 indicates, instead of living far

away from Fogera, it is better to lead a life of penury in Fogera, which is a lovely and the loveliest is enough.

It further goes to stress that it is not only the land of Fogera that is beloved but also its people. The following poem reflects this point.

58. ሳቅና ጨዋታ ዝና ካግራኹሁ፣  
እንደኛ ፎገራ በተወለዳችሁ።

If fond of playfulness fame and fun,  
In Fogera as we, you had better been born.

The first line of the poem indicates the down to earth fun lovingness and playfulness of people of Fogera. The second line of the poem counting the reason behind Fogera's people's playfulness is the area itself. The poem shows Fogera is therefore the select few. It as well conveys it is not only the land of Fogera attractive but also its people.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

In this thesis an attempt has been made to discuss the oral poems of the people of Fogera. Based on the analysis of the collected poems, some of the major themes of the oral poetry of the people of Fogera those reflect the life styles of the people are identified.

In Fogera, the burial of the dead is one of the human events during which the people display their social belongingness. Whenever a community member passes away, inhabitants of that community gather at the house of the bereaved to partake in the lamination of the deceased and condole with the bereaved in his hour of trial. In such situation, most of the poems analyzed in the study appear to demonstrate the deceased's personality, wealth, wisdom, bravery, charitableness, or all the virtuous things he accomplished during his life time.

Moreover, Fogera's oral poetry depicts the presence of a social stratum based on differences in wealth among the society. From the perspective of social class, the mournful poems chanted to the poor differ from the rich one. The difference lies in the colorfulness and grandness of the send off ceremony and the extent of the elegy with praises that magnifies the charitableness of the wealthy one. However, elegies that focus on social issues, other than wealth or the manifestation of wealth, are similar to both the poor and the rich one alike.

Apart from social class and wealth differences, the oral poems also depict the social belongingness of the society. During funeral procession, the bereaved with a cursory glance, checks as to who are attending the ceremony and as to who failed to do so. Through their funeral songs the people stress that crying at other's burial ceremony is considered a debt for one doing so, for the bereaved owes him/her gratitude to be paid later.

In addition to this, via their oral poetry the people of Fogera also reflect the ugliness of the era. When the death toll is high they sing a song to indicate the coming closer of Armageddon, as people are fast dying.

Similarly, some of the elegiac poems reflect the outlook of the people of Fogera towards God or nature. Sometimes when something bad occurs, they bitterly condemn God or nature through their oral poetry to reflect the unfairness of God or nature.

Moreover, Fogera's oral poetry portrays parenthood in light of love and strong social attachment within a family. In this line describing mothers as the only and important protectorate of children while the role of a father and a brother in defending a family have been the recurrent themes reflected. In addition to this, expressing grievances, complaints or attacking someone using satiric remarks are common in the people of Fogera oral poetry.

There are also oral poems that are chanted during working times. The oral poems composed by the people during threshing and farming activities mainly comprise songs that praise the oxen and underline the economic significance farmer's accord to their oxen. By magnifying the value of the ox, some of the themes of the oral poems depict the marginalization of the poor from social interaction, for not affording to have an ox.

In Fogera, organizing different feasts turn by turn, during different religious festivities, is a common practice. However, a farmer devoid of an ox is naturally ostracized from such kind of events as he couldn't afford to host similar events during his turn. Therefore, the people of Fogera stress such kind of ostracizing through their work songs to nudge the indolent to work hard.

In Fogera if during his life time the deceased was doing an exemplary agricultural work, participating in battle fields, or if he was a sniper, he would be praised as a highly esteemed person with heroic recitals. Apart from this, through heroic recitals, the people

of Fogera undermine a man who retreats and get easily captured at the appearance of enemies.

The deceased's strong stand for justice, eloquence of speech, and his outstanding counseling performances while he was alive are also among some of the identified themes of the oral poetry of the people of Fogera.

The people of Fogera praise their land of origin through their oral poetry. Among the poems, some depict the transformation of their culture from cattle rearing to rice farming while others magnify the fertility of the area and pride to their origin still others stress how rice farming became their major economic activity.

To sum up, from the identified themes of the oral poems, it is possible to recognize that the oral poems of the people of Fogera can reflect people's way of life.

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**አማርኛ**

ኑርሁሴን መሐመድ። 1986። በፎገራ አካባቢ የሚሰሙ የአዝማሪ ግጥሞች ይዘታዊ ትንተና። የዲግሪ ማሟያ ፅሁፍ። አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ።/ያልታተመ/

አምባቸው አለባቸው። 1987። የሴት ጣውንት ግጥሞች ይዘትና ቅርፅ ትንተና። የዲግሪ ማሟያ ፅሁፍ። አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ። /ያልታተመ/

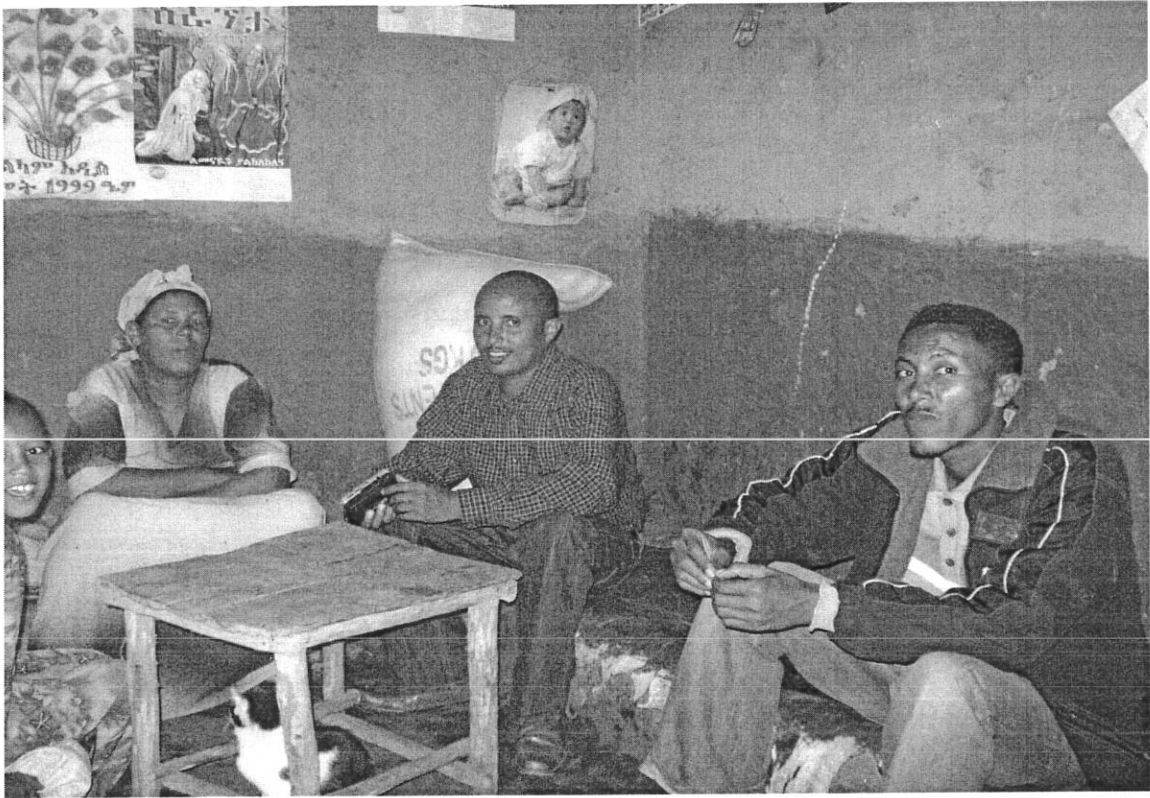
**Appendix 1 List of Photographs**



My Field assistant (Worku) recording poems at the funeral ceremony



My Field assistant (Worku) recording poems at the funeral ceremony



Interview with a woman informant



Mourner holding a goblet during the funeral ceremony



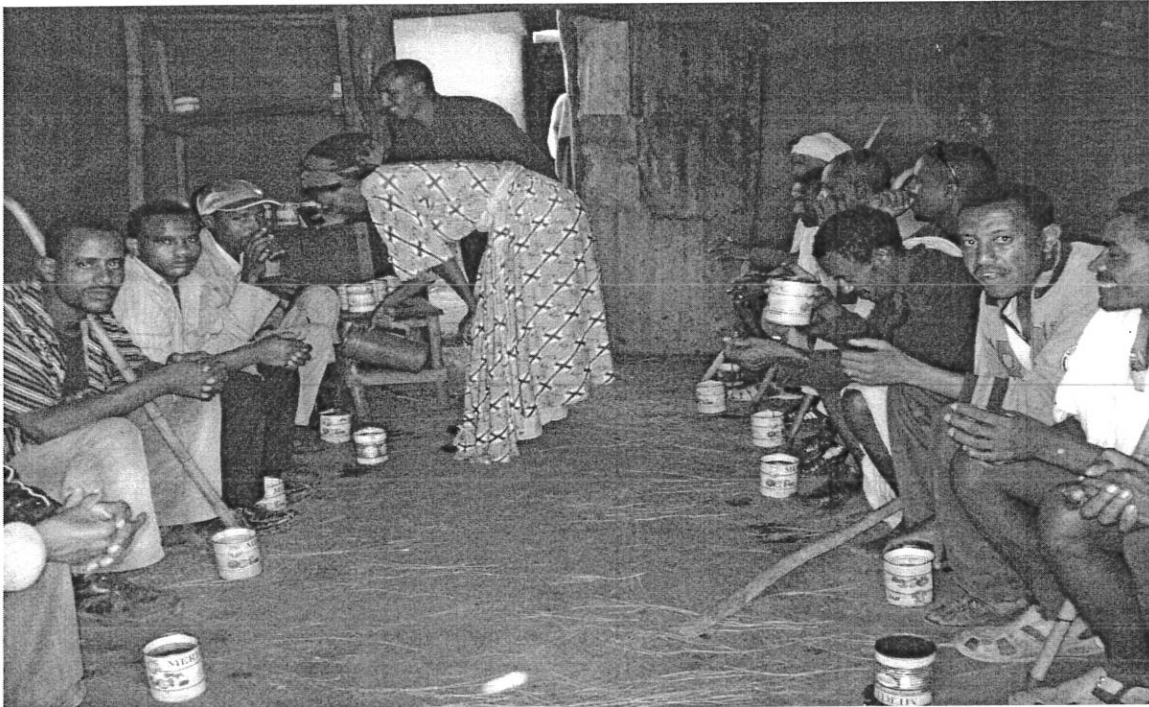
Interview with elder informants after the funeral ceremony



Interview with a woman informant after the funeral ceremony



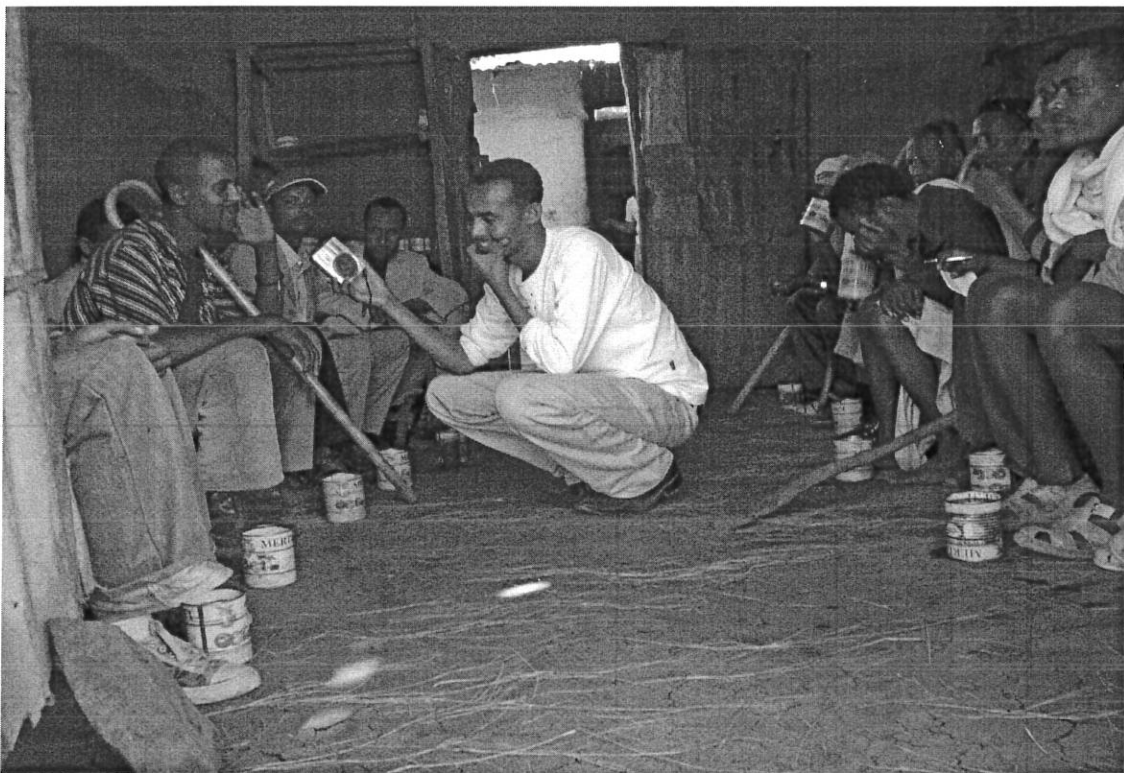
Recording poems from informants



Recording poems from T←lla bet



*A farmer during plowing*



My field assistant (Wondeson) recording poems from T←lla bet

## Appendix 2 LIST OF INFORMANTS

No	Name	Age	Sub-distinct	
1	Ato Agmas Zewdu	23	Male	Shaga Mariam
2	Ato Nega Alelegn	27	Male	Shaga Mariam
3	Ato Shebabaw Bimrew	70	Male	Shaga Mariam
4	Ato Chekol Worku	39	Male	Shaga Mariam
5	Ato Misganaw Shiferaw	32	Male	Rib Gabriel
6	W/ro Yeshi Belay	27	Female	Rib Gabriel
7	Ato Mengiste Lakew	50	Male	Rib Gabriel
8	Ato Ayalew Chale	42	Male	Rib Gabriel
9	W/ro Asmarech Belete	45	Female	Woreta Zuria
10	Ato Adebabay Negash	27	Male	Woreta Zuria
11	Ato Wole Tilahun	45	Male	Woreta Zuria
12	Ato Moges Shumye	38	Male	Woreta Zuria
13	Shambel Chane	29	Male	Woreta Zuria
14	Ato Tadesse Asrat	45	Male	Woreta Zuria
15	Ato Getahun Getu	67	Male	Kuhar Michael
16	Ato Belete Wodaje	46	Male	Kuhar Michael
17	Ato Agmas Belay	52	Male	Kuhar Michael
18	Ato Asmamaw Getu	57	Male	Kuhar Michael
19	Zerfu Dubale	40	Male	Kuhar Michael
20	Ato Asrat Takel	50	Male	Tewana Zakena
21	Ato Mekomon Belay	68	Male	Tewana Zakena
22	Ato Meregata Sisay	48	Male	Tewana Zakena
23	Ato Amare Mengiste	32	Male	Tewana Zakena
24	Ato Moges Walle	40	Male	Tewana Zakena
25	Ato Yimer Bante	29	Male	Tewana Zakena

Map of Fogera District



Source: Fogera District Administration Office (2000 E.C.)

## Appendix 4

1. ከዳገት ላይ በሬ እየጠመዳችሁ፣  
ኋላ መመለሻው እንዳይቸግራችሁ።
2. አረግፋ ብለው ይገፋል በግዱ፣  
ያገሩ ገመገም ሲጠፋው መንገዱ።
3. ይታሻል ይቆላል የተዘከሩ በባሶ፣  
ለኛም ወሰደኝ ለሱም ቀኑ ደርሶ።
4. ጎለል ጎለል ይላል የሰማይ ደመና፣  
እባት መሣሪያ እንጅ አይሆንም ልቦና።
5. በልጅግ አለቀሰ ምርር ብሎ እንደሰው፣  
ከአልጋ ላይ ተኝቶ ትኋን እየላሰው።
6. ቁልቁለቱን ወርደህ ወንዙን ስትሻገር፣  
እስኪ እንደታቻምናው ነካካኝ በነገር።
7. ጎድጓዳ ስፍራ ክምር ከማሪ፣  
አውድማ ሙሉ ነጭ አበጣሪ።
8. የበሮቹ ስም ጨቦና ቦራ  
የማረሻው ስም ሰደህ አቅራቫ፣  
የጅራፉ ስም ሳይመትር በላ።  
የገበሬው ስም ሙሉ ጎበላላ።
9. ካረባ ጋሻ ይሻላል እርሻ  
በሰፊ ደግር በሹል ማረሻ
10. ትግል ገጣሚ ያለእኩያቱ፣  
አዙሮ ደሬ በጭንቅላቱ።
11. ድንጋይ ቢሳሳ አይቆረስም፣  
የዛ ጀግና ልጅ አይቀመስም።
12. ዱብ ዱብ አሉ እንደበረዶ፣  
በልጅነቱ በረሃ ለምዶ።
13. በተወለደ በአምስት ዓመቱ፣  
ትግል ገጣሚ ያለእኩያቱ፣  
አይሆንለትም ስትል እናቱ፣  
አዙሮ ደሬ በጭንቅላቱ።
14. አያ በሬ ደጉ አንተን ማንገራገር፣  
ነፍስ እንደገደሉ ታስጥላላህ አገር።
15. እንጀራ ሆነና የሰው ቁም ነገሩ፣  
አልቀበር አለ ሰው ሁሉ ባገሩ።

16. ሆ በሬ ሆ በሬ ሲል እየሰማሁት፤  
የጠመደበትን ሥፍራውን አጣሁት።
17. አይ እንጀራ ደጉ የት ሁነህ ጠራኸኝ፤  
የት አገኝሃለሁ ቁመህ ካልቆየኸኝ።
18. እንደበሬ ያለ መከረኛ የለም፤  
ሲሞት አይቀበር አይተኛ ሲታመም።
19. እንደ በሬ ለምኔ ይላል የተመቸው፤  
እንኳን ለዘላለም ለአንድ ቀን አገኝቸው።
20. በዚያም በዚያም ብላ እናት ትጣራለች፤  
ና ብላ ነው እንጅ ሌላ ምን ትላለች።
21. መካን አለሞተኛ በኖረች ዘላለም፤  
ኸረ እናቴ እናቴ የሚላት ልጅ የለም።
22. ጎረቤቱ ሲሞት ያልቅስ ጎረቤቱ፤  
ከማን ይጫወታል ከተዘጋ ቤቱ።
23. አንቺ ፍትፍት ፍትፍት እኔ ጉርስ ጉርስ፤  
መሄጅስ ነው ወይ ብድራን ሳልመልስ።
24. ተንጫጩ ልጆቼ ያንጫጫባቸው፤  
የእናት ገበያ የለው እንዳንገዛላቸው።
25. አደባባይ ቁሜ የሚዋሰኝ ባጣ፤  
መሬት መሬት አየሁ ቆፍሬ ላወጣ።
26. የኔማ ወገኖች ዘራቸው ታምሶ፤  
መልካም በቅሎ ነበር ጠፋ ተመልሶ።
27. ተዋት አትገልግሏት እሽም አትላችሁ፤  
አባቷ ልኮባት ስትሄድ እያያችሁ።
28. እኔ ላልቅስ እንጅ ማን ያልቅስ እላለሁ፤  
መደብ ተደግፌ የጠጣሁት ሳለሁ።
29. እስኪ ወዩ ልበል ምናልባት ባውቅበት፤  
ሁሉ አልቃሽ ይሆናል እየደረሰበት።
30. ሞት መጣ ይላሉ በበሩ ዘለቀ፤  
ይሰናዳ የለም ስንቁን የሰነቀ።
31. እናቴ ደህና ሁኝ በቀስታ ዳመና፤  
እንግዲህ በምድር አትገኝም እና።

32. አታንጉርጉሩብኝ እንጉርጉሮ አልወድም፤  
በድንገት የወጣ አለኝና ወንድም።
33. እስኪ ሰፊድ ስጡኝ አፈሩን ላንፍሰው፤  
ምሁሩ ወንድሜ ያንን ሁሉ ቀለም ከምን አደረሰው።
34. ድንጋይ ጨምሩበት ካፈሩ በላይ፤  
አፈርማ እራሱ ሆኖ የለም ወይ።
35. በሮችህ ተጠምደው ከበሰላው ላይ፤  
ያንን አንድን ዘር ጥላኸው መሄድህ ነው ወይ።
36. እኔስ ከሰዎቹ ቦታው አሳዘነኝ  
ያሳማ መዋያ ሊሆነው መሰለኝ።
37. ምነው በዝናቡ ምነው በክረምቱ፤  
ከሰው ቤት ያባራል እንኳንስ ከቤቱ።
38. አምላክ በአንድ ነገር አይጠረጠርም፤  
የከፋው ሰው ሙቶ ደስ ያለው አይቀርም።
39. ምን ነጭ ቢለብሱ ቢመስሉ ጨረቃ  
አወይ የሰው ነገር ተመልሶ ጭቃ።
40. የመቃብር ጉድጓድ ወርዱ ስንዝር ሙሉ፤  
የሚዘላት የለም ከጎበዙ ሁሉ።
41. የተራብ ሁሉ የሚበላውን፤  
አፈር በላው አሉ አባ ባህርን።
42. መብላቱም ይቅርብኝ አፈሩን ልብላው፤  
መጠጡም ይቅርብኝ ደሙን ለጠጣው፤  
ከደጃፍ ቁጭ ብለህ ድምጽህን ልስማው።
43. ሰው ከሞተ ወዲያ ከወረደ አንጋዳ፤  
ወዳጁን አይጠቅም ጠላቱን አይጎዳ።
44. እስኪ ጠይቁልኝ ወንዙን ሳይሻገር፤  
እንዴት ብሎ ሄደ የወገኑን ነገር።
45. አስፈረድኩኝ ስትል ይፈረድብሃል፤  
አሮጌ እናትህን ጅብ ይበላብሃል።
46. እንደግዚአብሔር ክፉ እንደመሬት ሆዳም፤  
ሌባ እንኳን ከበረት አራስ ላም አይነዳም።
47. በስተ ምሥራቅ በኩል ፀሐይ ጨበረረ፤  
ዘር ያላችሁ ዝሩ የኛስ ዘር አረረ።

## **Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and all sources of materials used for the thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Name Marye Tefera

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Place Addis Ababa University

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