

## Chapter 4

### Oral storytelling in Ethiopian Children's Stories<sup>1</sup>

#### Background to oral storytelling

Before bedtime, as Lamin watched with wide eyes, Kunta acted out his favourite of all the stories – springing suddenly about with an imaginary sword slashing up and down, as if Lamin were one of the bandits whom their uncles and others had fought on every day on a journey of many moons, heavily laden with elephants' teeth, precious stones, and gold, to the great black city of Zimbabwe.<sup>2</sup>

In this short passage from the novel *Roots*, Haley describes how oral storytelling was passed from generation to generation. He retold the story told to Kunta as a child about the small boy and the crocodile with its message: 'It *is* the way of the world that goodness is often repaid with badness.'<sup>3</sup> This tradition of telling stories with a moral or an explanation dates back centuries. It still continues in some parts of the world, particularly where written literature is less available such as in certain areas of Ethiopia. *The Storyteller* was written to demonstrate the value of storytelling today. It is a form of entertainment, a means of passing on a message, sometimes in a subtle way, and incorporates skills usually passed down through generations to create a performance. Although the gist of a story can be written down and preserved in a book or on a website, it loses much of its content when the oral element is removed as will be explained in this chapter and in the commentary following the novel in chapter 9.

However, the influence of the outside world, technology and education have impacted on this art and it is losing its importance in the local culture of the people, a theory shared by Anita Pandley who noted that: 'while this art form is not extinct, it is rapidly being eroded with the influx of popular culture.'<sup>4</sup> Will this accelerate with the modern

developments and increased communication as it has in Europe and other parts of the world where oral storytelling has all but vanished?

In Britain there are few tales that are retold orally through the generations without recourse to printed materials. The nativity story from the Bible remains one of the few stories that are passed on orally through families, school and Christian communities.<sup>5</sup>

Relatively few children could give an example of another story that was passed on to them by an elder person in the way that their ancestors experienced. Benjamin acknowledged this fact over fifty years ago when he wrote:

Familiar though his name may be to us, the storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant. More and more often there is embarrassment all around when the wish to hear a story is expressed. It is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, the securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences.<sup>6</sup>

He went on to explain that stories had to be assimilated and remembered, and how the activities associated with boredom, were already extinct in the cities and were declining in the country, causing the loss of the ability to listen:

For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to. The more self-forgetful the listener is, the more deeply is what he listens to impressed upon his memory. When the rhythm of work has seized him, he listens to the tales in such a way that the gift of retelling them comes to him all by itself. This, then, is the nature of the web in which the gift of storytelling is cradled. This is how today it is becoming unravelled at all its ends after being woven thousands of years ago in the ambience of the oldest forms of craftsmanship.<sup>7</sup>

Travelling through the Ethiopian countryside today, observers will frequently see individuals or small groups of adults and children tending the family herds for hours on end. The tasks of ploughing, reaping, winnowing and grinding are still done manually in many parts of the country and children would also be involved in these repetitive tasks.

Spinning, weaving and other traditional activities continue to be carried out in many homesteads across much of the country, not just in rural areas. One could assume that such a lifestyle maintains this ‘web’ with its ‘rhythm of work’ and ample time and opportunity for stories to be remembered and developed. One could also ask whether increased communication and the access to technology and education has already impacted and led to a decline in storytelling even in the most rural parts of Ethiopia.<sup>8</sup>

### **History of storytelling**

Stories and folklore cover a number of formats such as the fairy tale, myth, legend, fable, song, riddle and the proverb. Their history goes back in time to days before people developed the ability to read and write. There is certainly evidence of fairy stories being written down in ancient Egypt<sup>9</sup> but Krappe believed that the Animal Tales are: ‘...the oldest that are known to-day.’<sup>10</sup> It is possible that such tales were told in Ethiopia though whether early examples could be proved to be the source of *Aesop’s Fables* cannot be verified.

It is thought by some that this most famous among story tellers, Aesop, who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, was taken to Greece as a slave from Ethiopia - the connection being the similarity of his name and the country, Aethop.<sup>11</sup> At that time the name ‘Ethiopia’ would have referred to the whole ancient Nile civilization including modern day Ethiopia. The similarity of many of his fables to those told today in Ethiopia leads one to question whether such stories emerged in Africa, or further east where similar tales developed and influenced the writings of story tellers. Aesop is often wrongly acknowledged as the author of these tales whereas he was more likely to be responsible for the collecting and possible

editing of fables. Regardless of whether Aesop did come from Ethiopia, or if such a slave was responsible for telling these tales, in relation to storytelling in Africa they share the same characters, usually animals and birds, often with universal characteristics, and each story has a message that is relevant in different communities across the world and is just as significant for today's population as it was centuries ago.

The link between Ethiopia and Greece does not start with Aesop. The myths which were told in Greece from around 700 BC relating to the creation of the world include stories which specifically refer to Ethiopia, a land known to early Greeks. One such story is that of Perseus who, with the aid of winged sandals, passed through Ethiopia on his return from slaying Medusa. It is said he dropped some of Medusa's blood on Africa which resulted thereafter in the land being full of wild beasts. As he passed through Ethiopia he found Andromeda, daughter of the king of Ethiopia, Cepheus, and his wife, Cassiopeia, tied to a rock. In order to punish her mother, who said Andromeda was more beautiful than the sea goddesses, Poseidon sent a flood and a terrifying sea monster, the Ethiopian Cetus, to the country. Perseus, aided by his winged sandals, killed the sea monster and married Andromeda. Another myth relating to 'Aithiopia' concerns Benthesisyme, goddess of the waves and a daughter of Poseidon, who was the wife of the first Ethiopian king Enalos (of the sea) who may have also been Triton.<sup>12</sup>

There appears to be little evidence of stories told in Ethiopia reflecting such myths but similarities with ancient Indian fables do exist. Many were written by Vishnu Sharma about 200 BC following a request by a king to teach his sons important morals.

Panchatantra<sup>13</sup> tales are divided into five manuals (panch means five) which contained

important guidelines for a future king. One story about a lion and a hare has the moral that nothing is impossible for those who are wise:

A lion goes around killing hapless creatures in a forest. The creatures get tired of living in fear all the time and gather courage to go to the lion with a solution. They tell him that daily one creature would be sent to him as food. The lion is pleased and agrees. The animals now decide that the creature whose numbers are the maximum shall be sent one by one. The hare turns out to be the biggest in number and is sent to the lion. Reluctant to go to the lion, he wanders in the forest and finds an ancient well. When the lion becomes impatient after waiting for a long time, he goes out in search of food. The hare tells him that he was going to come to him, but was stopped by another lion who claimed to be the king of jungle. The lion gets infuriated when he hears this and demands to meet the other lion. The hare takes him to the well and tells the lion to look inside. The lion sees his own reflection and in anger, jumps inside the well to kill the other lion and dies.<sup>14</sup>

There are similarities between this story and the Ethiopian *Greedy Dog* (used in the author's fictional work, *The Storyteller*) and Aesop's fable, *The Dog and the Shadow*, in the use of reflections to fool the greedy character.

Comparisons of myths, legends and stories across the world have been the subject of research by Okpewho, Finnegan, Krappe among others. Okpewho identified different approaches to the study of oral narrative in Africa and quotes Roscoe's findings on the Baganda traditions of Uganda where a history was created to 'explain the origin of their race, their kings and their gods' which emerged as different versions of legends but developed into 'a trustworthy account of the origin of man and beast.'<sup>15</sup> Okpewho also refers to Propp's 'functions'<sup>16</sup> identifying common motifs amongst fairy tales, and to Lévi-Strauss who identified that: 'a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader anywhere in the world.'<sup>17</sup> The use of the numbers two and three is common in tales reputedly from Ethiopia (such as in *An Act of Kindness*, *The Three Wise Men* and *The Clever Son* which are reproduced in *The Storyteller*) and in fairy tales<sup>18</sup> such as those which the Brothers Grimm collected and published in German.<sup>19</sup>

Whether or not similar stories emerged in different parts of the world or migrated with the movement of peoples, they were invariably subject to modification, elaboration and all manner of change while they remained in their oral form. Thus the role of the storytellers also has importance.

### **Storytellers and the art of storytelling**

Finnegan emphasised the: ‘significance of performance in oral literature [which] goes beyond a mere matter of definition: for the nature of the performance itself can make an important contribution to the impact of the particular literary form being exhibited.’<sup>20</sup>

Osayimwense Osa and Hale both described the importance and functions of oral storytellers in western sub-Saharan Africa, the griots, which not only involved words but also ‘advising, diplomacy, and instrumental music.’<sup>21</sup> Hale, who referred to Haley’s *Roots*, went on to explain that their:

...profession is as old as the civilization of West African Sahel and Savanna regions and it is apparent that these wordsmiths are not simply a caste of parasitic buffoons or minstrels clinging to ancient ways. They are instead a dynamic and distinct element of many West African societies.

Griots possess a kind of verbal power that links them inextricably to those who hold other forms of power in society – or who would like to appear as holding such power.

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Lorentzon described how the griot was praised as both an entertainer and an educator stating: ‘the former instance can be understood as a narrating technique, where rhetoric as *persuasion* has precedence. The task of the historian is more concerned with motif, the content or moral to be taught.’<sup>23</sup>

While griots were to be found in western African countries like Nigeria and Ghana before spreading to the Diaspora, the *azmari* singers of Ethiopia continue to perform a similar function. Their role is to entertain through song and verse making up the content

based on the people in the audience, the current political situation and other factors. There is a particular form of verse in Ethiopia known as *sem-enná werq* (wax and gold) in which there are two layers of meaning: the literal meaning is the ‘wax’ while the hidden meaning is the ‘gold.’<sup>24</sup>

Famous among the African writers, Chinua Achebe used oral storytelling examples and techniques within his own works to get nearer to his people. In his novel, *Things Fall Apart*,<sup>25</sup> he links the traditions of the Igbo people with storytelling and language. He includes proverbs, folk tales and songs from their language to convey its quality. Achebe is a master of storytelling who has achieved recognition by both his own people and the world at large. Habila states: ‘...it is a mark of Achebe’s genius as a narrator that one could hear him many times on the same subject and never grow bored – a reminder that in the art of the storyteller, it is not content alone that matters, it is also the performance, the presentation and the passion.’<sup>26</sup> Achebe told the BBC in an interview that the oral tradition was not essential and Africans should not be ‘overly concerned’ if the art of storytelling was to die out although he saw the importance of maintaining his mother tongue, in spite of the fact that he actually writes in his colonial language, English, stating: ‘I hope I have shown it is possible to show respect to English and Igbo together.’<sup>27</sup> Okpewho describes the talent of Achebe in subtly exploiting ‘the material of the oral tradition’<sup>28</sup> and the inclusion of proverbs and selected short stories from his native Igbo in his books.

Whatever lies in the future for African storytelling, the rich resource of stories should live on through the efforts of researchers and writers who gather traditional oral narratives and write them down, perform them or use them as the basis for their own original works. Language and culture play a valuable part in this literature. The songs and

poems use a highly stylized form and, ‘meter and rhythm are more important than conceptual coherence because in traditional society every word is charged with a particular force.’<sup>29</sup> Okpewho also described how traditional African songs rely on repetition which gives the writing a different flavour to that we recognise in European prose and poetry.

[...] such language exhibits artistic beauty in content and draws its power from specific linguistic features, such as alliteration, repetition, rhyme, rhythm, mnemonic, ideophone, euphemism, and synecdoche. These devices not only make the expression unusual but also make it appealing and therefore easily remembered.<sup>30</sup>

He identified clear differences between the oral narratives and the print versions in terms of the amount of description and the ‘desire to incorporate certain elements (ideas, techniques, etc.) of modern culture into the material of an old tale if only as a way of stressing the immanence of the old ways.’<sup>31</sup> The content of the stories was thus important in their evolution and preservation.

### **Subject matter of African oral stories**

While the context of storytelling may differ considerably in different parts of the world, particularly Africa, the content of the narratives compares more closely to the myths, fables and stories found in other parts of the world. Finnegan cited scholars such as Chatelain who: ‘could assert with confidence in his authoritative survey that many myths, characters and incidents known elsewhere also occur in African narratives, and that African folklore is thus a ‘branch of one universal tree.’<sup>32</sup> Such poetry and prose can be based on beliefs, explanations of creation and why things are as they are. They may use common features and characters such as animals, mythical creatures as well as humans including the stepmother who is often as wicked as her Western counterpart in Hansel and Gretel or

Sleeping Beauty. Ethiopian examples include *Mamo the Fool*,<sup>33</sup> (reproduced in *The Storyteller*) the *Story of Jahiti and her Sister* from the Shinasha, in the Benishangul region and *The Wicked Stepmother*, an Arsi story from Oromia. In countries where polygamy still exists, although it may be unlawful, and where death may still take mothers at an early age, children may relate to such tales.

### **Animal Tales**

Many stories use animals that are common to or known about in the country where they are told. Although lions are rare sights, even in African countries, they are widely used to depict strength, sometimes cruelty and even stupidity. According to Knappert, in many African religions lions are ‘revered as a god’ and they are assumed to be so potent that ‘even one hair from the eyebrows of a lion is believed (in the Horn of Africa) to give a woman power over her husband so that she can have children from him by catching his mind.’<sup>34</sup>

The use of hares is also universal often depicting wisdom and cunning although in the story that Aesop wrote called the *Lion and the Hare* it is the lion’s greed rather than the wiliness of the hare that results in the latter surviving. The Ethiopian tale of the same name in *The Storyteller* depicts a different fable where the hare again outwits the lion. Another story used in *The Storyteller* explains why monkeys are found up trees. A similar African story has been used in one of the BBC’s animated stories for its acclaimed children’s television series, *Tinga Tinga Tales*.<sup>35</sup>

Hares are frequently seen in stories across the world and tend to carry the same characteristics. In the Panchatantra stories of India the hare is wily and cunning and further

north, in Tibet, its cleverness outwits the tiger. Often stories about hares are similar in different communities, particularly across Africa:

In one pan-African story, the Moon sends Hare, her divine messenger, down to earth to give mankind the gift of immortality. "Tell them," she says, "that just as the Moon dies and rises again, so shall you." But Hare, in the role of trickster buffoon, manages to get the message wrong, bestowing mortality instead and bringing death to the human world. The Moon is so angry, she beats Hare with a stick, splitting his nose (as it remains today). It is Hare's role to lead the dead to the Afterlife in penance for what he's done.<sup>36</sup>

Many stories about the hare, or rabbit, transferred to the west through the slaves who took their storytelling traditions with them and, combined with the stories of the native American Indians, this led to stories of Br'er Rabbit surviving to this day. It is the wise hare who wins the hand of a princess in the Ethiopian tale that was reproduced for a young British audience to solve the problem of how to win against strong competition.<sup>37</sup>

Hyenas also conjure up strong but often sinister images and in addition to stories about hyenas, there are also tales about hyena men and hyena women<sup>38</sup> across Africa which appear at night. Knappert identified one story of a hyena man from Sofara (Mali) who went hunting at night to provide his children with meat but, when he became old he changed his eldest son into a hyena then died suddenly. The son could not change back to human form so wandered around the village until the inhabitants felt sorry for him and fed him.<sup>39</sup>

The purpose of stories is partly for entertainment for adults<sup>40</sup> as well as children; sometimes they offer an explanation and sometimes education in the form of epics and also in proverbs. Vambe considers the 'complexity of the African oral storytelling tradition in its variety of forms such as songs, allegory, folktale, spirit-possession, fantasy and myth, ancestry veneration, ritual, legend, proverbs, fables and jokes amongst others.'<sup>41</sup> He agrees with Eileen Julien and notes that: 'whether it is folktale, fable, the fantastic or myth, there

is a desire to reveal that there is no single definition of the 'real' in the ways these narratives construct and represent reality. This capacity for orature/literature to say one thing and mean another is the allegorical dimension in art... (i.e. that the reality is made to appear as if it actually happened in another time or place with different people).<sup>742</sup>

### **Explanation Tales**

Explanations of why things are as they are and the search for meaning appear in many stories. Some relate to the creation myth. Jan Knappert cites a number of examples from different African countries including that myth held by the Efe tribe of Zaire which bears comparison with the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible. Their story explained how God created the first man, Baatsi, out of soil and when God had finished making him, told him that he and his children could eat any of the fruits except the *tahu* fruit which belonged to the spirits of the dead. The God created a woman and gave her to Baatsi. When she became pregnant she insisted that he gave her the *tahu* fruit to eat. God found out and punished them by taking their immortality away from them.<sup>43</sup> In Ethiopia Laird's retelling of the tale of *When the World Began* the focus is on why man became the master of cattle and the buffalo.

Tales from across the world have sought to explain why creatures act in such a way or have particular features or characteristics. From eastern Nigeria come the tales of *Why the Bush-Fowl Calls at Dawn and Why Flies Buzz* told by the Ekoi tribe and another tale from the same country but a different tribe, the Ibibio which explains *Why the Bat Flies at Night*.<sup>44</sup> In Ethiopia stories abound about why animals behave as they do including *Why Monkeys swing from Tree to Tree*.<sup>45</sup> Achebe also uses the stories passed down through

generations of Igbo Nigerians in an explanatory way, particularly in his book *Things Fall Apart*.

All of the birds have been invited to a feast in the sky and Tortoise persuades the birds to lend him feathers to make wings so that he can attend the feast as well. As they travel to the feast, Tortoise also persuades them to take new names for the feast according to custom. He tells the birds that his name will be “All of you.” When they arrive, Tortoise asks his hosts for whom the feast is prepared. They reply, “For all of you.” Tortoise proceeds to eat and drink the best parts of the food and wine. The birds, angry and disgruntled at receiving only scraps, take back the feathers that they had given to Tortoise so that he is unable to fly home. Tortoise persuades Parrot to deliver a message to his wife: he wants her to cover their compound with their soft things so that he may jump from the sky without danger. Maliciously, Parrot tells Tortoise’s wife to bring out all of the hard things. When Tortoise jumps, his shell breaks into pieces on impact. A medicine man puts it together again, which is why Tortoise’s shell is not smooth.<sup>46</sup>

Another tale of the *Tortoise and an Eagle* by Aesop concludes with the tortoise, who has begged the eagle to teach him to fly, falling to earth and crashing to his death. A different tale of these same two characters, this time from Central Africa, shows how their friendship is tested when the eagle tries to deny the tortoise the same hospitality. Once again the tortoise is threatened with falling to his death but he clings onto the eagle’s talons and is safely returned, a lesson having been learnt by the eagle.<sup>47</sup>

Such use of oral stories is common across most African countries. Mende, the Sudanese subject of a book about her cruel abduction and experience of slavery, described how her father would tell her family stories around the fire explaining beliefs among their own people.

My father was telling the story of why the Nuba never hunt monkeys. .... Lots of black, hairy monkeys lived in the forest around our village, but we never hunted them. My father said that the reason they looked so human was that they had once really been people, but they had been bad during their lives and so Allah decided to turn them into monkeys. And that’s why we never killed them and ate them.<sup>48</sup>

## Proverbs

Proverbs are also important in that they too are rooted in the culture and: ‘are interwoven in local languages. At the same time, they constitute a sub-language of their own.’ according to Cotter who wrote:

Proverbs that deal with ethical and moral issues reach not only the head but also the conscience. They stir the conscience, they give assurance, they help in the exercise of deciding between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong. Many are highly pregnant with religious content accumulated over the generations. They address themselves to all parts of society [...]<sup>49</sup>

Finnegan’s research into the African proverb identified a general agreement that: ‘[i]t is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by ‘shortness, sense, and salt’ and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it.’<sup>50</sup> She noted that, as with other oral forms of literature, they were widespread across the continent (yet absent from some regions) and were ‘interwoven’ with other forms of verbal art such as music.<sup>51</sup>

Benjamin wrote: ‘[a] proverb, one might say, is a ruin which stands on the site of an old story and in which a moral twines about a happening like ivy around a wall.’<sup>52</sup> He further explained:

... the storyteller joins the ranks of the teachers and sages. He has counsel – not for a few situations, as the proverb does, but for many, like the sage. For it is granted to him to reach back to a whole lifetime (a life, incidentally, that comprises not only his own experience but no little of the experience of others; what the storyteller knows from hearsay is added to his own). His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his entire life. The storyteller: he is the man who could let the wick of his life be consumed completely by the gentle flame of his story....The storyteller is the figure in which the righteous man encounters himself.<sup>53</sup>

Lorentzon quotes Solomon Olyaseres’ work in describing the tradition of evaluation within African oral literature where: ‘every recital was followed by an analysis and appraisal by the audience, particularly by the elders, who were themselves skilled in the

arts of story-telling and rhetoric.<sup>54</sup> In Ethiopia, in particular, the importance of oral storytelling traditions is evidenced in this next section.

### **Ethiopian oral literature and the emergence of written stories**

Ethiopia is a country with a long history of writing. Even though literacy is still far from universal, storytelling remains important in many parts of the country. Evidence of the stories told for centuries appears in the Christian literature which survives. Some of the oldest stories told in Ethiopia are located in the *Kebra Nagast*, (The Glory of Kings of Ethiopia) which, according to Budge, was probably compiled by a Coptic priest and dates back to about the 6<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. It was then translated into Arabic with additions and transformation and subsequently translated into an Ethiopian language and, even as far back as the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Bruce had produced an English summary of the document. The content of this document includes: ‘legends and traditions, some historical and some of a purely folk-lore character, derived from the Old Testament and the later Rabbinic writings, and from Egyptian (both pagan and Christian), Arabian, and Ethiopian sources.’<sup>55</sup>

One of the most important myths<sup>56</sup> is that of the Queen of Sheba and Solomon which supposedly justified the Solomonic Dynasty ending with the reign of Haile Selassie I. The British Museum has a 1971 painting of this tale by Afewerq Mangesha, a type of cartoon illustration that is commonly available across Ethiopia.



The story of King Solomon and Queen Sheba, painting by Afewerq Mangesha AD 1971 from Ethiopia (112.00 cm x 84.00 cm Donated by Lady Margaret Jean Campbell to British Museum 1991 Af8.25)

The main theme of this story is the visit by the Queen of Sheba (believed to have been an Ethiopian in that part of the world) to King Solomon in Jerusalem. As described on the British Museum site:

It begins by explaining how Ethiopia was terrorised by a serpent called Wainaba who demanded a sacrifice in exchange for water... Hearing of Solomon's great wisdom, Queen Sheba decided to visit him, taking with her gifts of gold, sapphires and ivory. Although she was received with honour, on the last night of her visit Solomon tricked her into sleeping with him and she returned to Ethiopia pregnant with a son... and when he grew up he went to seek his father in Jerusalem. Solomon recognised and acknowledged him as his son and educated him in the art of kingship... he ruled as Emperor Menelik I, becoming the first in a long line of what became known as Solomonic kings. He is also believed to have brought the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to Ethiopia along with the first born sons of Solomon's court.<sup>57</sup>

This story is told across Ethiopia and, along with other tales from the *Kebre Nagast*, appears to be still believed by some. As Budge wrote in his preface:

It must be said at once that we shall never know whether the queen who visited SOLOMON was a pure-blooded ABYSSINIAN or an Arab queen from YAMAN or HADRAMAUT or some other part of the great Arabian peninsula. But the tradition that some "Queen of the South" *did* visit SOLOMON is so old and so widespread, that a kernel of historical fact, however small, must be hidden somewhere in it... As Christianity spread southwards the idea of the Solomonic ancestry of the kings of

ETHIOPIA in the period between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries gained ground everywhere.<sup>58</sup>

Oral storytelling ensured that this story, just like the Christian nativity story, was recognized and accepted by Ethiopians as part of their culture. Although acknowledged for its long history of writing, Ethiopia was not a literate nation and there continues to be a high level of illiteracy, particularly among the adult population. However, the stories such as those in the *Kebre Nagast* also survived because they were compiled and recorded in books and manuscripts. It is still a matter of contention that a large number of these old documents, including two copies of the *Kebre Nagast*, are in Britain, located in the British Museum, the Windsor Collection, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Library. They were collected by Napier's troops following the death of Emperor Theodros II at Maqdela, the subject of the author's story, *Back in Time*.

The Maqdela Collection, as it became known, was a library of manuscripts and books gathered by Theodros from churches in Gondar and his other domains. Rita Pankhurst quotes from the missionary Waldmeier's description of the sacking of Gondar in 1866: '...houses were plundered, hidden treasures sought out and stolen, churches robbed of their holy relics, their prayer books, their other old documents.'<sup>59</sup> Richard Pankhurst said: '[t]he quantity of books and manuscripts taken amounted to the equivalent of both Ethiopia's national library and national archives.'<sup>60</sup>

When Courlander and Leslau collected stories during the 1950s, they attributed the wealth of literature to the Christian and Muslim influences overlying older traditions and the European invasions. They were able to identify regional differences with stories told in Muslim areas (such as Somalia and Harar) tending: 'towards the episodic and heroic' while

the characteristics of stories from strong Christian communities were: ‘sharp and often poignant.’<sup>61</sup>

In 1982 Seifu Metaferia wrote a paper based on his study of oral literature in Ethiopia. He noted that the oral telling of tales was often done during daytime when the cattle were being herded and children would sit under a tree. On such occasions the narrator would often finish the tale with the saying: ‘*tarateen mallis, afeen badaabbo abbis*,’<sup>62</sup> which, according to Michael Daniel Ambatchew, means now it’s your turn; nourish my mind with a story and my body with bread. Seifu stated that a number of Amharic proverbs reflected adult prejudice towards children. He wrote: ‘*lij acaawaachinna atint yammigit and naachaw*. He who amuses a child, and he who eats meat from a piece of bone, especially show ugly faces.’<sup>63</sup> He also explained the characters in the tales told in Ethiopia, for example, the gabaree, or farmer, was hard working but was mistreated or deceived by his wife against whom he used a stick. The donkey was often ‘hyena prey’ and therefore an unfortunate character while the goat symbolized profanity and the baboon was foolish and paid for his folly.

Amhara region provides only part of Ethiopia’s rich store of oral folk tales, poetry, proverbs and other literary forms. There are thousands of Amharic proverbs (in 1980 a collection of 3878 was noted in *Journal of Semitic Studies*)<sup>64</sup> written in the language of Amhara region which is also taught and used nationally. One commonly heard proverb translates roughly as ‘little by little an egg will walk’, meaning things take their own time. Conversely, one is now less likely to hear the saying, ‘women and donkeys need the stick.’

Poems and songs also contribute to the literary culture of the region created and presented for occasions such as war, death, weddings, hunting and work, sometimes

directed at children. Getie Gelaye gathered information on Amharic oral literature, one of many involved in this area of research. His study of children's songs in Amharic acknowledges the work of others including Seifu Metaferia and a German, Eugen Mittwoch, who was the first to deal with the subject of children's songs and games in Amharic in his article in 1910. As Getie noted from his own field research: '... the most common occasion for the performance of children's songs is while looking after the cattle and watching the harvest ... In their songs, children raise matters related to the interrelationship of individuals residing in their own community such as hard working and lazy peasants, husband and wife affairs, etc., and comment on issues related to local politics and administration.'<sup>65</sup> He also provided examples of verse composed after the Derg government fell in 1991 when children were no longer sent to the war front including: '[h]ere comes a donkey loaded with cow dung, There is no longer military recruitment.'<sup>66</sup> According to Fekade Azeze, the first line does not necessarily connect to the second line but provides the rhyming syllables. Such examples support the statement that: 'unlike written literature, orature has unfixed boundaries, which gives it greater freedom in its execution and interpretation – it can thus be used to praise and criticize those in power.'<sup>67</sup>

In the 1920s an Italian, Enrico Cerulli, made an in-depth study of the Oromo, a people covering much of southern and central Ethiopia, extending into Kenya, with their own language and the largest share of the Ethiopian population. Melbaa refutes the belief that the Oromo came to Ethiopia after the Amhara people, first quoting Bates who said in 1979: '[t]he ... (Oromo) were a very ancient race, the indigenous stock, perhaps, on which most other peoples in this part of eastern Africa have been grafted.'<sup>68</sup>

Cerulli located and translated many of the Oromo songs, stories and proverbs,<sup>69</sup> often passed down from father to son. This may have changed in more recent times as Boki Tola, a lecturer in Oromia, told the author that in his experience it is grandfathers who tell the stories – fathers being too busy. Among Cerulli’s sources was a *Galla Spelling Book* by Onesimos Nesib, a native Oromo, printed near Massowah, in 1894. Among the many examples included, transcribed in the local language alongside the English translation, are a number of proverbs including: ‘[w]ith one wife, the heart is warmed; with the other wife, the kettle is warmed,’<sup>70</sup> reflecting the practice of polygamy which would have been acceptable among the mainly Muslim population in earlier times. This and other proverbs, verses and folktales on the subject of the role of women are further discussed in the next chapter on the context in Ethiopian children’s literature. Cotter also describes how the Oromo were fond of their proverbs, *mamaska*, and used them wherever the context allowed, their being particularly effective in groups, requiring a: ‘reflective pause and then a response.’<sup>71</sup>

John Hamer in his studies of folktales among the Sidama people of the southern region of Ethiopia found that they often had an impact on the production and circulation of wealth. The area where this people live is one where the cultivation and preparation of crops - enset (false banana) and maize - and cattle rearing, are the main family occupations. Hamer’s research in the 1960s included collecting over eighty tales of two types: one was said to have originated as mothers attempted to distract children during the long meal process so that they forgot their hunger; the other, often told by men in groups, had a moral and was used to settle a dispute or make a point.<sup>72</sup>

He provides an example of tale about a lion meeting a wild sheep and their mutual agreement to watch over each other and ensure that no harm came to them while they ate. As the sheep became fat the lion wanted to eat it but the sheep warned that if that happened nothing would happen to the lion but it would destroy any descendents. The lion wasn't bothered and lunged at the sheep which caught the lion on its horn, fatally wounding it. As it lay dying the lion asked why he, and not his descendents, should have suffered. The sheep responded that the lion was paying for what its father or father's father had done. This story had apparently been told at a meeting of elders where the relatives of a recently deceased villain wanted the memory of the man's crimes to be excused. 'Then the old elder says, "In like manner we must protect the children of the deceased who are blameless, by accepting the fine."'73

Elsewhere in Ethiopia there is evidence of the oral storytelling tradition among the different ethnic groups. In the Omo Valley region, part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), there are agriculturalists such as the Basketo group which has a tale of the *Lion King, Hyena and Clever Monkey*, pastoralists such as the Banna people, highland agriculturalists including the Yem people who tell the tale of the *Selfish Baboon and the Clever Monkey*<sup>74</sup> and Gamo people who tell a tale about the *Verdict of a Serpent*. These stories all use fantasy to offer hope and justice as well as fostering self-confidence, growth and development. 'The characters of the tales are everyday people or animals using minds, skills or cleverness to achieve objectives – success does not come from supernatural actions, or unexplained events, but from the wise use of reason and common sense.'<sup>75</sup> Wild animals are portrayed but there is no reference to religion or money.

Research into this subject has developed in Ethiopia with a course in oral literature included in the Addis Ababa University Department of Languages and Literature in 1979 and a graduate programme in Folklore and Ethiopian Literature in 2003.<sup>76</sup> Field research has been undertaken across Ethiopia for decades, studying evidence in many of the different languages and the range of Ethiopian oral literature, including the role of the *asmari* (minstrel) and the impact of more recent historical and political events on poetry and songs in different languages such as Afan Oromo, the language used by the character Abraham/Ibrahim in *The Storyteller* by the author.

Oral literature has a number of functions for different audiences, including entertainment and teaching. Finnegan wrote: '[s]tories, for instance, are told to educate and socialize children, or, by drawing a moral, to warn people not to break the norms of the society.'<sup>77</sup> In addition to the stories which have become part of the Ethiopian culture, a large number of which are now available on the website [www.ethiopianfolktales.com](http://www.ethiopianfolktales.com), as well as in written children's literature, Ethiopian writers and illustrators have also captured stories from other parts of the world and translated them into Amharic. Alem Eshetu has produced illustrated books using stories such as *One Greek Slave and a Lion* (possibly based on Aesop's tale), *The Truthful John* and *The Three Soldiers* (possibly from Grimm) which appear in a compilation under the title translated as *The Old Witch*<sup>78</sup> using imported illustrations, possibly from original volumes of these tales.

Seifu recognised that oral literature is: 'between a state of agedness and that of rejuvenation.' and stated that: 'the popularizer will attempt to take every oral literacy piece he collects, in this case, tales, stories etc. to freely work on, so as to make them appealing reading material to kids.'<sup>79</sup> That task continues in Ethiopia with the purpose of making

literature relevant to the young people of and from a nation, preserving the rich legacy of oral resources from the different regions and cultures and creating a vast library of fascinating tales that will continue to enthrall young and old from across the world for generations to come. This will require care for as Melrose wrote: '[i]t is a myth that somehow the fantasy of a pure story exists in any represented form. Nonetheless, despite cultural shifts and historical scholarship, a storyteller must, by necessity, take certain precautions in presenting a translation.'<sup>80</sup>

To preserve the oral storytelling tradition may be a lost cause in a world where technology and education have moved people away from such a culture. What seems more important now is to fully appreciate this art form while protecting as many as possible of the stories, rhymes, riddles and proverbs in a retrievable format and sharing them.<sup>81</sup> Laird and Sargent explained how the Ethiopian folktales were gathered and made available digitally in English and explained some of the stories and their comparisons with other fables in different parts of the world.<sup>82</sup> The question of who was to use this collection and what for led to a suggestion that, as computer access increases in the country, the educational role for which the stories were originally compiled would be realised.

In Ethiopia modern technology is also playing its part in preserving this tradition:

Ababa Tesfaye is a renowned children story-teller on Ethiopian national television. Every night at the beginning of the popular children's show, he presents folk-tales to children accompanied by his hallmark conspicuous passion and enthusiasm. He is a fascinating character for generations of Ethiopian children and his unique zeal is always intact. He has been putting smiles on the faces of children while providing them with complete grounding in Ethiopian history, cultural practices and etiquette. His stories and the way they are told are among most Ethiopians' favorite childhood memories for they are unique, quite telling, and most of all, enjoyable.<sup>83</sup>

With the growth in use of electronic readers such as Kindle and iPad, technology could help preserve and develop oral storytelling for children in Ethiopia, as in the rest of the

world. Access to mobile phones and computers is increasing among a young population already familiar with the TV screen in the classroom;<sup>84</sup> the electronic book may prove to be one solution to publishing problems in this vast country. The internationally broadcast *Tinga Tinga Tales*<sup>85</sup> have brought African folktales including those collected by the children's story writer and illustrator, John Kilaka from Tanzania, into the homes of a wide audience. Yet they have yet to reach many of the places in Africa where these stories originated. In John Kilaka's own words:

Every day at dawn I was walking by foot, some hours, looking for people who know the stories. To walk by foot for hours is hard if you want to work well, later I rented bicycle from my host so that I could be able to get in some places where I wanted to go for finding story tellers.

The culture of story-telling is disappearing, so not many people knows the stories anymore. But on lucky day, you will find a story-teller, and then you will enjoy listening to amazing stories.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Papworth, H. (June, 2011) 'Oral Storytelling and its Importance in Ethiopian Children's Stories' paper presented to Great Writing Conference, London, June, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Haley, A. (1976) *Roots*, New York: Doubleday & Co Inc., p61.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid p9.

<sup>4</sup> Pandley, A. (2002) 'Kaki No Be Leda: The Oral Bases of Children's and Youth Literature in West Africa' *Sankofa – a Journal of African Children's and Young Adult Literature*, Baltimore: Sankofa, p14.

<sup>5</sup> Melrose A. (2001) *Storykeeping – The Story, the Child and the Word in Cultural Crisis*, Carlisle UK: Paternoster Press, p46.

<sup>6</sup> Benjamin, W. (1968 reprinted 2007) *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, p83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid p91.

<sup>8</sup> Yet Berger and Quinney (2005) refute this writing: '... since the last quarter of the twentieth century, we seem to have undergone a storytelling revival. The writing and reading of autobiography and biography are more popular than ever.' *Storytelling and Sociology Narrative as Social Inquiry*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p8.

<sup>9</sup> Bettelheim, B. (1976 reprinted 1991) *The Uses of Enchantment*, London: Penguin. 'The motif of the two brothers is central to the oldest fairy tale, which was found in an Egyptian papyrus of 1250 B.C.' p91.

<sup>10</sup> Krappe, A. H. (1962) *The Science of Folklore*, London: Methuen, p60. 'The animal tale in its most primitive form is essentially an aetiological story, i.e. a tale purporting to explain a cause... From the very childhood of the race Man may be presumed to have shown considerable interest in the animal world around

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him, for reasons of pure self-interest, if not from intellectual curiosity. But even the savage is a keen observer and is struck by the zoological peculiarities of each animal form.' Krappe was sceptical as to the African origin of certain folklore (fairy tales). 'It may...be seriously questioned whether either Ethiopians or American Indians are at all capable of the sustained interest required by the ordinary fairy tale with its string of various adventures.' p3 While his language borders on naïve racism, his apparently prejudicial attitude towards African mythology compares to that of Finnegan who Okpewho quoted in the preface to his 1983 book, *Myth in Africa* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, '...myths in any strict sense do not seem, on the evidence we have, to be a characteristic African form at all' pix. This thesis does not, however, claim to prove the origin of the stories, myths and other tales which claim to be Ethiopian.

<sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop%27s\\_Fables#Aesop\\_and\\_Ethiopian\\_Traditions](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesop%27s_Fables#Aesop_and_Ethiopian_Traditions) and <http://www.aesops-fables.org.uk/> include suggestions of links between Aesop and Ethiopia, downloaded on 9/11/2010. Krappe, (op cit p65) wrote '...Aesop of doubtful historicity, whom tradition credits with the invention of the Greek fable, was probably no Greek at all, ... but in all probability a Semitic slave writing in Ionia.'

<sup>12</sup> Servi, K. (2006) *Greek Mythology*, Athens: Ekdotike Athenon S.A.

<sup>13</sup> An explanation for the source of these tales according to Krappe (op cit p41) is that they came to Europe from India after Alexander the Great's India campaign and then became part of the Arabian Nights before becoming certain Panchatantra stories. They had therefore migrated twice.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.iloveindia.com/literature/sanskrit/panchatantra.html>., downloaded from web site 11/1/2010.

<sup>15</sup> Okpewho, I. (1983) *Myth in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p5. Okpewho also noted here how the 'need to impress in men the moral truth that wickedness and cruelty in the long run meet with their due reward' led to a vast increase in stories and proverbs. Comparisons could be made with origin of the myths and proverbs in Ethiopia. The question of where myths originated is also raised; the Aryan hypothesis p3, the Egyptionist theory p238 and the Abyssinian movement p286, the latter a reaction by those Africans who saw the black race as the descendents of the lost tribes of Israel which came to Ethiopia and established their Coptic Christian faith rather than deriving from 'Egypt with its Islamic implications'.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid p 53

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p39

<sup>18</sup> Krappe, (op cit p4), inferred that, until non Aryan variants appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, fairy tales were assumed to be of Aryan origin.

<sup>19</sup> Bettelheim, (op cit p 102), makes reference to the Brothers' Grimm use of three in *The Three Feathers*. 'The number three in fairy tales often seems to refer to what in psycho-analysis is viewed as the three aspects of the mind: id, ego, and superego.' Krappe, (op cit p31), wrote, 'In the technique of the fairy tale the observation of certain customary rules or 'laws' is clearly noticeable. Thus the numbers two and three prevail almost throughout.'

<sup>20</sup> Finnegan, R. (1976) *Oral Literature in Africa*, Nairobi: Oxford University Press, p2.

<sup>21</sup> Hale, T. A. (2007) *Griots and Griottes*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, p18.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid p317.

<sup>23</sup> Lorentzon, L.(1998) *An African Focus' A study of Ayi Armah's Narrative Africanization*, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell Int., p17.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.wax-gold.com/> provides further information, downloaded 28/3/2011.

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- <sup>25</sup> Achebe, C. (1958) *Things Fall Apart*, Oxford: Heinemann International Publishing.
- <sup>26</sup> Habila, H. 'Pride and Passion; Sunday Guardian Review, 13/02/2010, p 9, referring to Achebe C. (2009) *The Education of a British-Protected Child*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Okpewho, I. (1983) *Myth in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, also comments on translated collections of folk tales. 'The principal mark of these efforts at preservation by Africans is the sheer joy of wading in the lush legacies of the race.' p161
- <sup>27</sup> BBC NEWS <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/4380400.stm>., downloaded on 2/1/2010.
- <sup>28</sup> Okpewho, I. (1992) *African Oral Literature*, Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p315 He also quotes Achebe in *Myth in Africa* telling us that among the Igbo 'proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten'. p 161,181-2.
- <sup>29</sup> Okpewho (1992) op cit p9
- <sup>30</sup> Quoted in Gikandi, S. (ed.) (2005) *Encyclopaedia of African Literature*, London: Routledge [www.infomar.org/files.php?file=EnglishDictionaries/...pdf](http://www.infomar.org/files.php?file=EnglishDictionaries/...pdf) ., downloaded on 3/3/2010.
- <sup>31</sup> Okpewho, I. (1983) *Myth in Africa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 187 & 215. 'In the contemporary creative writing of Africa, the element of performance can be seen in terms of the freedom which the artist is willing to assume from the received material of the oral tradition;...' p263
- <sup>32</sup> Finnegan (1976) op cit p29.
- <sup>33</sup> The format of this fairy tale fits with identified criteria e.g. 'There is a good deal of humour also in the types centring the adventures of a 'fool', often enough likewise a 'widow's son', ' Krappe (op cit p25) wrote: 'The innumerable fairy tales in which the hero is at first depicted as a simpleton...' 'There are many fairy tales in which an all-too-serious princess is won by the man who can make her laugh...' Bettelheim op cit p103 & 186.
- <sup>34</sup> Knappert, J. (1995) *An Encyclopedia of Myth and Legend - African Mythology*, London: Diamond Books, p141. The moral of this story, Michael Daniel Ambatchew explained, is that if a woman is wise and careful enough to tame a lion to pluck a hair from its eyebrow, she would easily be able to do the same with her husband.
- <sup>35</sup> 'You see there was a time when Monkey used to play on the ground and he loved to wind up Crocodile. One day the big rains came and Monkey became stranded up a mango tree. Nasty Crocodile promised to take him to dry land but only in exchange for his heart! So Monkey tricked Crocodile, and when Crocodile found out that Monkey swapped his heart for a measly mango, he chased Monkey up a tree. From that day on Monkey swings in the trees keeping well clear of Crocodile's angry snaps.' <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00qzkwq>., downloaded on 11/4/2011.
- <sup>36</sup> <http://www.endicott-studio.com/rdrm/rr/Rabbits3.html>., downloaded on 11/1/2010.
- <sup>37</sup> King, J. (2002) *The Tales of Grampa Sea*, Shropshire: Grampa Sea Publishing, p30.
- <sup>38</sup> See appendix 2.
- <sup>39</sup> Knappert (1995) op cit p114.

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<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Laird, who made five trips round the regions to gather tales for Ethiopian school reading books, emphasized the fact that Ethiopian folk tales were originally intended for adults. (telephone conversation on 8/12/2010) Other experts such as Finnegan acknowledged this fact.

<sup>41</sup> Vambe, M. T. (2004) *African Storytelling Tradition and the Zimbabwean Novel in English*, S.Africa: UNISA, p4.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid p4.

<sup>43</sup> Knappert (1995) op cit p58.

<sup>44</sup> Arnott, K. (1962 reprinted 2000) *Tales from Africa*, Oxford: Oxford University Press p 152.

<sup>45</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/things/canalysis.html> - Summary of Chapter 11, downloaded on 11/1/2010.

<sup>47</sup> A version of this story is located on <http://www.angelfire.com/ma3/mythology/friendship.html>., downloaded on 9/11/2010.

<sup>48</sup> Nazer M. & Lewis D (2007) *Slave*, London:Virago, p90.

<sup>49</sup> Cotter, G. (1997) *African Proverbs Series Vol 1 Ethiopian Wisdom – Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People* South Africa: UNISA, pvii and x.

<sup>50</sup> Finnegan (1976) op cit p393.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid p392.

<sup>52</sup> Benjamin (1968) op cit p108

<sup>53</sup> Ibid p108-9.

<sup>54</sup> Lorentzon (1998) op cit p35.

<sup>55</sup> Budge, Sir E.A.W. Preface to present edition of Kebrä Nagast <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/kn/kn000-1.htm> p iii, downloaded on 2/3/2010

<sup>56</sup> Finnegan (1976) op cit p362 -3, cites Bascom's description of myths as 'often associated with theology [...] set in an earlier world' which she notes are not common in African oral literature.

<sup>57</sup> [http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.britishmuseum.org/images/solomonsheba\\_m.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/aoa/s/the\\_story\\_of\\_solomon\\_and\\_sheba](http://images.google.co.uk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.britishmuseum.org/images/solomonsheba_m.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/aoa/s/the_story_of_solomon_and_sheba) , downloaded on 2/3/2010.

<sup>58</sup> Budge, Sir E.A.W.(2000) downloaded on 2/3/2010.

<sup>59</sup> Pankhurst, R. (1973) 'The Library of Emperor Theodros II at Maqdala (Magdala)' <http://www.jstor.org/pss/613105>, downloaded on 2/3/2010.

<sup>60</sup> Independent Newspaper reporter, Terry Kirby (19/10/2004) <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/hidden-in-a-british-museum-basement-the-lost-ark-looted-by-colonial-raiders-535318.html>., downloaded on 2/3/2010

<sup>61</sup> Courlander, H. and Leslau, W. (1950 reprinted 1995) *The Fire on the Mountain and Other Stories from*

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*Ethiopia and Eritrea*, New York: Henry Holt and Company, p121.

<sup>62</sup> Seifu Metaferia 'Oral Literature of Ethiopia as a Source of Material for Children's Books: sample study (1982) *Workshop on Children's Books*, Addis Ababa: The National Children's Commission and Italian Cultural Institute, p4.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid p7. According to Michael Daniel Ambatchew, it is disputed whether 'especially show ugly faces' is the actual translation.

<sup>64</sup> *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1980 [http://jss.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf\\_extract/25/1/85](http://jss.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf_extract/25/1/85), downloaded on 3/3/2010.

<sup>65</sup> Getie Gelaye 'Text Analysis of Children's songs in Amharic' (2002) Hamburg University [http://web.missouri.edu/~asfawa/childrens\\_songs.pdf](http://web.missouri.edu/~asfawa/childrens_songs.pdf). p293, downloaded on 3/3/2010.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid p296.

<sup>67</sup> Gikandi, S. (ed.) (2005) *Encyclopaedia of African Literature*, London: Routledge [www.infomar.org/files.php?file=EnglishDictionaries/...pdf](http://www.infomar.org/files.php?file=EnglishDictionaries/...pdf)., downloaded on 3/3/2010.

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<sup>68</sup> Melbaa, G. (1988) 'Oromia: an Introduction' Khartoum, Sudan <http://www.gadaa.com/thepeople.html>., downloaded on 6/1/2010.

<sup>69</sup> Cerulli E. (1922) *Folk Literature of the Galla of Southern Abyssinia*, (reprint from Harvard African Studies III). Copy located in the IES Library in Addis Ababa and on <http://www.samizdat.com/cerulli2.html>., downloaded 11/6/2011. NB The term, Galla, is now regarded as a derogatory description for the Oromo people.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid no page

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<sup>71</sup> Cotter op cit (1997) pxvii

<sup>72</sup> Hamer, J. (1994) 'Folktales as Ideology in the Production of Wealth among the Sadama of Ethiopia' *Proceedings of 11<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, Bahru Zewde, Pankhurst, R. Taddese Beyere (eds.) Addis Ababa: IES (Sadama is more widely recognised as Sidama)

<sup>73</sup> Ibid no page

<sup>74</sup> See appendix 2

<sup>75</sup> Copied from a caption in the Museum of Ethnographical Studies, Addis Ababa

<sup>76</sup> Getie Gelaye 'Ethiopian Contributions to the study of Amharic Oral Poetry' (2005) Hamburg University <http://web.missouri.edu/~asfawa/gelaye5.pdf>., downloaded on 3/3/2010.

<sup>77</sup> Finnegan (1976) op cit p330.

<sup>78</sup> The book, published in 1999, is in Amharic.

<sup>79</sup> Seifu Metaferia (1982) pp15 -16.

<sup>80</sup> Melrose (2001) op cit p63.

<sup>81</sup> Ethiopian Folktales <http://ethiopianfolktales.com/> downloaded on 26/11/2010. 'The stories were originally collected in order to provide material for the production of simplified English language readers, so that

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schoolchildren in each part of Ethiopia could read stories from their region's particular cultural heritage while practising their English. In all, eight such readers were produced.

This web-site has been set up to allow the rich and varied folk stories collected during the project to be available to a wider audience. It's a treasure trove of the tales which Ethiopians have told to each other since time immemorial, many of which had never before been written down or translated into English.'

<sup>82</sup> Diggle, T. 'Ethiopian Folktales Online: Creating a Resource' report on lecture of 16 March 2011 at SOAS, The Anglo-Ethiopian Society News File Spring 2011

<sup>83</sup> Hassen Seid <http://www.ethiopianmillennium.com/education.html>., downloaded on 25/11/2010.

<sup>84</sup> Broadcasts for most secondary school subjects reach students in every part of Ethiopia via satellite TV in the schools. The author observed broadcasted sessions in schools and visited the broadcasting centre in 2008.

<sup>85</sup> Claudia Lloyd explains her role in developing Tinga Tinga Tales for television and video broadcasts on <http://www.wegivebooks.org/news/origins-of-tinga-tinga-tales-show-and-books>, downloaded on 10/6/2011. John Kilaka, the author and illustrator of many of the original stories from which TV and film programmes, explained to a seminar on writing and illustrating children's books in the National Library, Addis Ababa, in May 2011 how he found the stories and developed them as illustrated books. He said he had interviewed people in his native Tanzania and gathered their stories which were illustrated in oils using the 'Tinga Tinga' style of art founded in Tanzania.

John wrote: 'I was one of five Tinga Tinga artists from Tanzania who were working for Tiger Aspect, one of the biggest film production companies in UK. Tiger Aspect was commissioned by BBC and Walt Disney to illustrate animation series called after our master painter Edward Saidi Tingatinga – Tinga Tinga Tales. The studio was set up in Kenya, the neighbouring country to Tanzania. My illustrations are used not only in the films but also used in books by Penguin Publisher, on packages for toys made by Bandai, on the Classic Media's website called [www.tingatingatales.com](http://www.tingatingatales.com) etc.' <http://www.kilaka.org/books.htm>., downloaded on 10/6/2011.

<sup>86</sup> [http://www.tingatingastudio.com/artist\\_kilaka1.html](http://www.tingatingastudio.com/artist_kilaka1.html)., downloaded on 10/6/2011.