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GETIE GELAYE

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21. – 23. 10. 1998 in Cape Town (South Africa):
3rd International Conference on Oral Literature in Africa

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Beispiel von Gunda Gunde angesprochen, das Paul Henze (Bethesda/USA) im Frühjahr dieses Jahres besucht hatte.

Fremde Einflüsse auf Themen in der äthiopischen Kunst wurden von Stanislaw Chojnacki (Sudbury/Canada): *Cataloguing Icons in the Collection of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies – Recent Discoveries* kategorisiert. Am Beispiel von heraldischen Emblemen der äthiopischen Könige und Kaiser zeigte Ian Campell (Addis Ababa–Nairobi) das Zusammentreffen und die Adaption abendländischer und äthiopischer/orientalischer Symbole.

Die Deutsche Welle, die ihr Haus als Tagungsort zur Verfügung gestellt hatte, berichtete über ihr amharisches, über Satellit ausgestrahltes Programm, das neben Nachrichten auch einen Sprachkurs: Deutsch–Amharisch anbietet. Die für die Deutsche Welle arbeitenden, äthiopischen Journalisten verfolgten mit regem Interesse die Tagung. Das Treffen wurde von einer Ausstellung des Malers Yohannes Gedamu begleitet, der seit 1967 auf internationalen Ausstellungen vertreten ist.

Veronika Six

21. – 23. 10. 1998 in Cape Town (South Africa): 3rd International Conference on Oral Literature in Africa

This conference was organized by the Department of African Languages and Literatures, University of Cape Town and held at the Centre for African Studies. As the organizers of the conference made it clear, the first and the second International Conferences on African Oral Literature were held at SOAS, University of London and Accra, Ghana respectively. During the three-day conference, a total of 38 papers was presented by various scholars of African oral literature who gathered together from different parts of the world, including Europe, Latin America, Asia, the United States and Africa herself.

As was stated in the call for papers, the general theme of the conference was “Oral Literature: Functionality in Contemporary Contexts”. Accordingly, the majority of the papers dealt with issues related to the role of African oral literature in the contemporary social, political, and historical contexts of African societies and cultural groups. Both the opening and closing key-note addresses were delivered by the well-known and widely read scholar Professor Ruth Finnegan, from The Open University, England, who wrote the first comprehensive and authoritative book on the subject, entitled: *Oral Literature in Africa*, 1970. This still serves as a major text-book in the discipline. In her closing remarks she was able to under-

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stand what she had provocatively questioned in her opening address, “Is oral literature really relevant for today’s Africa?”.

During the conference, a number of live performances by South African traditional musical bands and recitations of praise poetry, video shows and other entertaining events made the conference attractive and lively. The conference was attended not only by students and scholars of African oral literature but of African history, anthropology, religion, linguistics and politics as well. Conference participants strongly emphasized the need for an interdisciplinary approach in the study of African oral literature. Furthermore, the use of modern technology in collecting and recording the various genres of African oral literature with the help of audio and video tapes, computer-assisted analysis methods and the like was also widely discussed. The Ethiopian aspect was represented in the panel “Orality and Contemporaneity” by a paper with the title: “Social Change and Local Politics: The Peasants of Gojjam (Northwest Ethiopia) and their reflections on Contemporary Issues in Amharic Oral Poetry”. Finally, there was a general meeting that led to the founding of an International Society for Oral Literature in Africa (ISOLA) and the election of a General Council, consisting of six members, namely Graham Furniss, SOAS, University of London, Austin Bukenya, Makerere University, Jeff Opland, Charterhouse and University of London, Russell Kaschula, University of Cape Town, Anne-Marie Dauphin-Tinturier, LLACAN, Paris, and Paul Eguchi, National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka. The Meeting unanimously elected Dr. Graham Furniss as the first President of the newly-founded Society. It was also decided that the next (i.e. the 4th) International Conference on Oral Literature in Africa will be held in Uganda by the year 2000.

Getie Gelaye

15. – 16. 1. 1999 in Bologna (Italy): International Workshop: ‘Rim’ Land in Historical Ethiopia

The two-day workshop was organized by Professor Dr. Irma Taddia of the Università degli Studi di Bologna - Dipartimento di Discipline Storiche at Piazza S. Giovanni in Monte 2, and all sessions were held in the spacious Aula del Priore in the same historic building of the department conveniently situated right behind the Collegio Erasmus building where most of the guests were accommodated. The participants came from various universities and institutions of higher learning in Eritrea, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Sweden and the United States.

The papers presented and the lively discussions that followed each presentation demonstrated clearly that many of the conceptual terms in the cultural,