

The Mikael Iyasu Library: Mekelle University Acquires 2,500 Books from the Family of the Late Mikael Iyasu – Inauguration in June 2012

On June 14, 2012, an inauguration ceremony for Mikael Iyasu's Book Collection donated by his family members to Mekelle University was held in the Department of History and Cultural Studies (DHCS) of the College of Social Sciences and Languages. Hanna Mikael Iyassu, the daughter of the late Mikael Iyasu, and Dr. Kindeya Gebrehiwot, the Academic Vice President, were special guests of honor at the ceremony. Other distinguished guests at the event were Dr. Abdulkader Kedir, the Vice President for Research and Community Services, Dr. Gebreyesus Teklu, the Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Languages, Ato Goitom Tegene from Corporate Communication and Marketing Office, and heads of departments and librarians.

Among the speakers at the ceremony were Dr. Kindeya, Dean Gebreyesus, Ato Dinar Amare, Head of DHCS, Dr. Ayele Bekerie, and Hanna Mikael Iyassu. The media was present in full force at the occasion, including the Voice of America, which aired a special program on the collection in its Amharic Service. *Addis Admas*, the weekly national newspaper, also did a story on the Collection.

Mikael Iyasu was the son of General Iyasu Mengesha; he graduated from Oxford University where he studied history, economics and philosophy. His wish was for his collection to be sent to Ethiopia and made available to Ethiopian university students. His family members and friends fulfilled his wish by bequeathing his books to Mekelle University. Many people and institutions played pivotal roles in processing the books and shipping them to Mekelle University from London. Dr. Kindeya Gebrehiwot was instrumental in making the shipment possible. We got assistance from Tigray Development Agency, the MU Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, the Dean of CSSL, Professor Hailu Habtu of Addis Ababa University, the family members of Mikael Iyasu and Sofya P'ët'ros [Sophia Petros]. Professor Hailu recommended my name to the family and I corresponded with them for almost a year until we finally got the books here in our campus.

After more than a year of exchange of letters between Mekelle University and the family members of Mikael Iyasu in London, Addis Ababa, and Brussels, we successfully received 62 boxes of books on Friday, May 4, 2012 at 2:30 pm. It was the persistent efforts of many people both here, in Addis Ababa and in England that led to a successful acquisition of close to 2,500 books. The collection covers a wide range of topics, including history, philosophy, social science, literature, Ethiopian studies, psychology, languages and linguistics, Asian studies, economics, and African studies.

The collection helps to establish specialized small libraries within the MU Library System. The collection will certainly place MU on the global map, particularly with reference to books on philosophy. As a result, it is important

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that we take the utmost care of the collection. We intend to digitize the catalogued collection so that the books will be available to all Ethiopian students in all our universities. The collection is particularly rich in the field of philosophy. We may be the only university in the country to have a large collection of philosophical books covering almost all the great philosophers of the West, and some from the East. The collection also has a remarkable array of classical texts on history, economics, and social science.

As per our agreement with the family of Mikael Iyasu, the reading room in our Department was named after Mikael Iyasu. Hanna has also donated to the Library a framed photograph of Mikael Iyasu as well as his biography.

AYELE Bekerie⁷

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International Workshop on Documentation and Preservation of Ethiopian Cultural and Art Heritage of the Haddis Alemayehu Cultural and Research Institute, 19 May 2012, Debre Markos University – an Illustrated Conference Report

The inauguration workshop of the newly founded Haddis Alemayehu Cultural and Research Institute of Debre Markos University was held on 19 May 2012 at Debre Marqos in the historical province of Gojjam.⁸ As the University's Vice President for Academics and Research, the social anthropologist Yilqal Kefale Asres [Yilqal Kefalé Asres], put it: "The workshop included cultural issues such as contributions of oral poetry and other oral literature to the study of culture, the importance and the role of culture in preserving traditional culture in the face of globalization, and the discussion on expectations from our institutions."



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⁸ Special thanks go to Wuhebegezer Ferede of Mekelle University for his great support for our delegation.