

Conference Reports

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."



⁷ Historian (PhD), Associate Professor, Department of History and Cultural Studies, Mekelle University.

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



Participants and academic speakers were the newly appointed director, Ato Mesfin Fekadie [Mesfin Feqadé]; the literature specialist Getie Gelaye, Asia-Africa-Institute, Hamburg University; the social anthropologist Manuel Ramos, Associate Professor at the ISCTE in Lisbon; Isabella Orłowska from Poland, currently teaching philology at Addis Ababa University; Kelemework Tafere from Mekelle University (MU), Department of Sociology; Wolbert Smidt also from MU; and Chikage Oba-Smidt, National Ethnographic Museum of Japan in Osaka, currently in Mekelle.







Scholars of Debre Markos University presented papers on the writer Haddis Alemayehu and on local culture, with examples from Gojjam, and explained in a most lively way – interrupted by impressive music and dance performances – the wish to give value to the regional cultural traditions and to contribute to their better understanding. Invited scholars presented papers putting this new endeavor into the context of international discussions and research (e.g., referring to the UNESCO system of documentation and valorisation of cultural heritage), and also presented research on Ethiopian Orthodox church art, on livelihood and, for example, on the role of oral traditions in the constitution of local culture, society, and communication skills. Participants expressed great expectations towards the new institution, underlining that globalisation on the one hand creates great chances, but without an understanding of local cultural resources the chances of globalisation could not be creatively used.



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As this cultural workshop was organized as a great performance, it was decided to present it also in a performative way: in the form of illustrations capturing the event.

Manuel RAMOS⁹

⁹ Creator of the illustrations. Author of the short summary accompanying the illustrations: Wolbert Smidt.