

Lij Iyyasu And The Arsi Oromo, 1911-1936**Temam Hajiadem**

Haramaya University, Head, School of History and Heritage Management

Corresponding Email: thajiadem@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *In Ethiopia the history of many nations, nationalities, people and personalities were distorted or ignored for various reasons. One of the greatest personalities who had a far sighted mind and a reformer whose history was distorted was Lij Iyyasu. Lij Iyyasu, who had an Oromo and Islamic blood became emperor Menelik's successor in 1909 and assumed leadership role after the death of his regent, ras Tassama Nadew in 1911. This study focused on the Arsi Oromo who had a positive attitude towards Lij Iyyasu rule and personality than other Ethiopian rulers. To analyze this various Oral data sources like baaroo (hymns in praise of Sheikh Hussein), weddu (hymns in praise of cattle and babies) and interviews were collected. The secondary sources collected include student theses, articles and books also partly helped the researcher to fill the gap which was not discussed in primary data. After this was done, the writer organized the data into major themes and later the organized themes analyzed and interpreted using analytical and interpretation tool. The final work shows that the Ethiopian people's view on the history of Lij Iyyasu and the reaction to his reign is different from areas to areas and people to people in Ethiopia. The Arsi Oromo case shows that Lij Iyyasu personality and administration was highly admired and loved due to the fact that his period was associated with freedom in Arsi, the time when people got a breezing space and social and religious reforms, opening up of Oromoland and Islamic world.*

Keywords: Arsi Oromo, Lij Iyyasu, Allah Da'imu movement, socio-cultural movement

INTRODUCTION

Even though, now there are some improvements in writing the historiography of Ethiopia again the idea of complete and inclusive History is out of reach. Moreover, some historians deliberately ignored some important issues in Ethiopia History which do not fit into their political and cultural world view. One of the issues ignored in Ethiopia historiography was the period and achievement of Lij Iyyasu. As a young boy in Arsiland and later as a student and teacher in Oromia, I came across many positive narrations about this ignored ruler in Ethiopian historiography more than

any other ruler appeared in Ethiopia. It was this selectivity problem in Ethiopian Historical studies that attracted me to study and fill the gap.

As most of us may know *Lij Iyyasu* was a son of Mohammad Ali of Warra Himano and *Wayzero* Shewarega, a daughter of Menelik II. Mohammed Ali was originally a Muslim Oromo who was converted to Christian faith and took a Christian name *ras* Mikael with the rank of *Ras* by Emperor by Yohannes IV (1872-1889) and Menelik, king of Shewa at Boru Meda, Wollo religious conference in June 1878. The marriage alliance between *ras* Mikael and *Wayzero* Shewarega was consummated in 1892. *Lij Iyyasu* was born from this marriage in 1897 at Dassie, the city founded by his father (Ficquet and Smidt, 2014).

After emperor Menelik suffered stroke in 1909, he announced that *Lij Iyyasu* would be his successor. But *Lij (Abeto) Iyyasu* assumed full leadership of the country after the death of his regent *ras* Tassama Nadew in April 1911. *Lij Iyyasu's* reign was full of many historical events and reforms. Some of his popular reforms were,

1. Modified the traditional methods of *asrat* collection.
2. Made an attempt to redress the past wrongs which alienated the Muslims and Oromos and tried to introduce equitable system.
3. tried to reduce many tribute imposed on *gabbars*, a kind of serf (Bahru, 1991).

Probably because of these reforms *Lij Iyyasu* was highly admired by ordinary people of Ethiopian and it seems that there was abundant food production during his period compared to *Dajjach* Tefari (later, Emperor Haile Silessie I) who came after him and ruled for almost 58 years as a regent, king and emperor of Ethiopia as the following Amharic couplets indicate.

Ba Iyyasu dabbo new tirasu

Bs Tefar taffa firfar (common saying)

English translation:

During Iyyasu bread was plentiful

During Tefari there was no even the leftover food

This couplet and others which will be discussed later indicate that the ordinary people particularly the Oromo had a positive attitude towards *Lij Iyyasu* than that of *Dajjach* Tefari Mekonnen who later became Emperor Haile Selassie I from 1930 to 1974.

In spite of his admiration by local people who are periphery to Ethiopian politics, the elites (scholars, politicians and Orthodox leaders) in the center depicted *Lij* Iyyasu's rule with negativity due to his backgrounds (Mars'e-Hazan, 1938, Qadamawi Hayla-Sellase, 1965, Marcus, 1987). Besides this, his policy giving some recognition to ignored nations and nationalities through political marriage, building of churches and mosques as well as his foreign policies which treat all countries on equal terms depicted by the central Shewan nobilities and Orthodox clergy as anti- Amhara, anti-Christianity and anti- western countries policies which should be dealt in a bud (Bahru, 1991).

Hence, the main objectives of this study is to redress the imbalance in Ethiopian Historiography by highlighting the major achievements of *Lij* Iyyasu, the most loved and admired Ethiopian ruler in Arsi in particularly and Oromia in general. Moreover, this study will analyze *Lij* Iyyasu's reforms and its impacts on the Arsi Oromo and Arsi Oromos reaction to his downfall. By doing this the study will contribute partly to comprehensive study of Oromo history.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Personally, I was grown in Arsi Oromo farming society who cultivates their land and rear animals for their living. In my childhood I remember when the Arsi woman making butter they played a traditional song that glorifies cattle (*weddu*), their saints and even *Lij* Iyyasu. When I joined the university and I was writing a senior paper as a part of graduation requirements I also came across similar practices in another Arsi family. Gradually, with further reading and widening my connections with people from various Oromo lands I concluded that people attitude to *Lij* Iyyasu personality and period is positive but many literatures that came from the center, however, is not depicting this popular leader in a good color. It was in this way that my focus on the history of *Lij* Iyyasu and the Arsi Oromo view about him developed.¹

¹ In January 2023 Haramaya University organized the Second Oromo Study International conference; it was at that conference that this topic got a selection for presentation from many topics. The positive comment I got from many

In Ethiopia there were a few positive histories written on *Lij Iyyasu* but the majority works depicted him and his period in negative colors (Bahru, 1991; Ficquet and Smidt, 2014, Marcus, 1987). Moreover, we have a little written history of *Lij Iyyasu* from the Oromo perspective. But there exist many traditional songs that glorify cattle (*weddu looni*) performed by Arsi women which appreciated *Lij Iyyasu's* reforms that even favored the rearing of cattle and having abundant milk and butter, *baaroo* (which sung in praise of Sheikh Hussein, the famous saint of Oromo of south and south east Ethiopia), *weddu da'ima* (performed by mother to comfort her baby), women song during cultivating and etc. about *Lij Iyyasu* in Arsi. Moreover, the writer also interviewed many elders who knew about that period in Arsi as this study mainly focused on Arsi Oromo who now live in what we call Arsi zone.

Many scholars agreed that for the recent history reconstruction people's sayings, hymns, plays, couplets, poems, interviews and etc. have almost equal value with written documents because there is a low tendency for adulteration of information for recent past. It is for this reason that great scholars like Jan Vansina and the organization of United Nation Scientific Education and Culture (UNSECO) recognized the importance of people's oral narration as useful source as literary documents for the reconstruction of the history of non-literate societies (Vansina, 1964. 1971 & 1984; Ajayi, 1998). Hence, it is scientifically acceptable practices to write a history of a people depending on oral narration for those who lacks written history for a recent past. However, this does not mean that we did not substantiate the oral data collected over long period with the written secondary sources available at hand.

Having the above principles in mind, the procedures the writer used to write this manuscript is as follows. The popular sayings, *weddu* songs, *baaroo* hymns and oral information which collected over a long period of time were transcribed on the paper and translated from Afaan Oromo language to English. Later, the author organized the oral data which came from some *weddu* songs, *baaroo* hymns, people sayings and oral informants in the present Arsi zone. After this process was done, categorization of data into major themes was followed. Moreover, where is the

scholars on Ethiopian history during that occasion encouraged me to develop this manuscript into a published article. It was in this long process that this article emerged.

information gap about the personality of *Lij* Iyyasu and his rule, the writer also consulted some fragmentary written sources. Finally, using psycho-social theory, narrative and interpretive analyses the writer presented this study to its final completion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Arsi Oromo's View about *Lij* Iyyasu's Period and their Reactions to His Downfall

Following *Lij* Iyyasu's appointment as a successor to Menelik II in 1909 there was a great hope not only in Ethiopia but also in Arsi land like in other parts of Ethiopia. This feeling developed mainly due to his family and the personality backgrounds. He was a Christian by faith but his family background was from Muslim Wollo Oromo. So these qualities made him a perfect leader of the country. Having this in mind when Iyyasu came to power in 1913 and began to introduce some reforms the Arsi *gabbars* like other *gabbars* in Ethiopia benefitted from it. The reforms resulted in the reduction of *gibir* (tribute) payments and improvement in *asrat* (tithe) collection as mentioned above. Moreover, the Arsi Oromo also got a breezing space to freely teach their religion and began to consolidate it on firm basis. These reforms of *Lij* Iyyasu endeared him to the Arsi Oromo. It almost felt in Arsi land that a kind of liberation from exploitative *Naftagna-gabbar* (a kind of lord-peasant serfdom) system was happening.

Lij Iyyasu personally had contact with Arsi chiefs in Adama and he also visited *Ayyo* Momina a famous female saint in Arabagugu. The major issues discussed in Adama between *Lij* Iyyasu and Arsi chiefs were how to attract the Arsi Oromo to the political center, and also to analysis the suffering of Arsi Oromo under the exploitative *naftagna-gabbar* system. The visit to *Ayyo* Momina Ferakasa shrine was for religious reasons as well as to familiarize with Oromo and Islam culture. During the visit to *Ayyo* Momina Ferakasa shrine a lot of people from the then two sub-provinces of Arsi namely Arbagugu and Ticho came to Ferakasa to warmly welcome their leader. After half day stay *Lij* Iyyasu went to Robe town, the second biggest town in the then Arsi province where he also stayed for an hour and returned that day to Adama via Sire and Dhera towns. These all developments encouraged the Arsi Oromo to identify themselves with *Lij* Iyyasu (Informants: Haji Aliy Tolola, 2018; Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018; Temam, 2017).

Moreover, Godena Babbo, the founder of Mammadoch dynasty of Warra Himano of Wallo Oromo that ruled Wollo in the nineteenth century was originally from Arsi Oromo who moved to Wollo in the seventeenth century. Godena Babbo his remotest ancestor was Sheikh Hussein of Bale (Hussein, 2001). *Lij Iyyasu's* father Mohammad Ali was the descendant of that great Godena Babbo, the founder of Mammadoch dynasty who in turn the descendent of Sheikh Hussein of Bale, the pan Arsi Oromo spiritual father. Moreover, *Lij Iyyasu* after he came to power also claimed that he was a descendant of Prophet Muhammad family to which some Arsi Oromo clans also claim belong to. Iyyasu's liberal attitudes towards Islam and his marriage to Muslim families of Sultan Abu Bakar of Affar, Abba Jifar II of Jimma, Ugazi of Somali and marriage to Oromo family of Jote Tulu of Leqa Qellem also made the Arsi Oromo to completely identify themselves with him and practically *Lij Iyyasu* became 'their man' (Hussein, 2001; Ficquet and Smidt, 2014).

As a result of this development during 'their man' most Arsi Oromo began to freely express their cultural, social and religious practices which were despised by the previous regimes. The three most important developments happened in Arsiland during *Lij Iyyasu's* period and after his downfall were the development of some social and religious movements organized by personalities believed to have possessed a special power. These personalities had tried to give their community social, spiritual and even political vision during that glorious period to alleviate their community's daily difficulties. The second major development was the opening up of Arsiland to the Oromoland and Muslim world and thirdly the development of the concept of *jihad* (force) to reinstate *Lij Iyyasu* to power when he was deposed by combined forces of Shewans and Allied forces during WWI which include Great Britain and France in 1916 (Informant: Haji Laliso Kawo, 2018 ; Temam, 2002; Ketebo, 1999).

Now, let us discuss the three developments that had happened in Arsi in relation to the coming to power of *Lij Iyyasu* in 1911. When a community that felt they were sidelined and discriminated upon get a breezing space there is a tendency to organize in a group to express their feelings which was earlier latent in them. This group expression gradually developed into a kind of a social movement which had a millenarian movement character. The main factor for this development was a belief that *Lij Iyyasu* was 'their man' whom God had sent him to liberate them from *naftagna* oppression. Moreover, due to *Lij Iyyasu's* political liberalism the Arsi Oromo get

a breezing space and this also made them to express their feelings openly than before. One of the most important social and millenarian movement that later also spread to parts of Hararghe, Arsi, Bale, Borana and northern Kenya was that led by a famous saint named *Sayyid* Roba Garbi who was believed to have been born in Babbile, Hararghe around the close of 1870s. He came to Arsi during *Lij* Iyyasu period where he was promoted to Islamic sainthood. His social and a millenarian movement mainly aimed to restore the Oromo culture, Islamic religion and to give hopes to *gabbars* which were despised by the previous Ethiopian regime and oppressive lords (Fekadu, 1999; Sheikh Bayan. 1987).

Sayyid Roba Garbi was renowned for his prophecy and it was believed that most of what he foretold was fulfilled. Due to this belief some people both in Bale and Arsi claimed that he was sent by Allah during *Lij* Iyyasu rule which proves Iyyasu's selection by Allah. During Iyyasu period he had renovated some important medieval shrines like that of Hajj Nasir in Gadab (Informant: Haji Laliso Kawo, 2018; Temam, 2020).

Later, he moved to the eastern parts of Arsi and became a prominent person by foretelling events around the present towns of Balee, Addelle, Robe and Sakina, where the shrine of Sheikh Hussein is found. He was therefore, able to attract many followers from nearby areas in eastern Arsi. His major achievements was renovation of shrines of saints found in Arsiland, collecting resources from the rich and distribute some of it among the poor, encouraging free marriage among the people through the threat of curse for those who opposed his command. These actions helped poor *gabbar* people in Arsi to alleviate some of their burdens when the modern Non- Government Organizations (NGOs) and the imperial regime bureaucracies were not present to provide them with essential materials ((Informant: Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018; Areba and Wondifraw, 2003; Waajjira Aadaa, 2000).

During *Lij* Iyyasu's period and early parts of twenties, another important social movement was organized by Haji Sura. He was from the southeast Bale is believed to have Somali origin. His full name was Haji Uthman Haji Sura. He was said to have lived from the close of the 1890s to 1960s. He became famous by criticizing some practices such as the Arsi traditional marriage. With the coming to power of *Lij* Iyyasu he was emboldened more than before. Some people even claimed that he got the opportunity to meet *Lij* Iyyasu in Adama and he supplicated for *Lij*

Iyyasu's success in 1915. After he got some morale support from *Lij Iyyasu* Haji Sura threatened through the use of curse some Arsi chiefs who demanded high bride price during marriage contract and notifying the misbehaving chiefs to *Lij Iyyasu*. Using his *karaama* (special power) and threat of curse Haji Sura arranged many marriages between the poor *gabbars* and the rich families without the bride wealth. Due to this positive actions Hajj Sura is known in Arsi during that time as the 'father of girls' as he united various unequal families in wealth through marriage without demanding high bride price which was common in Arsi during that time (Informants: Haji Aliy Tolola; Sheikh Tahir Sheikh Muhammad, 2018; Temam, 2002).

The other reform which Hajj Sura initiated was preventing the Arsi Sheikhs from depending on the labor of the people as most of them did not personally work for their own sustenance. He was one of the most hardworking Sheikhs Arsiland ever produced. He did plough, sow and harvest for himself, while most of his social class were not. Probably because of this and above mentioned reforms, Hajj Sura was ostracized by some clerics and local chiefs who thought that his action was against a long-established tradition and also undermined their economic interest. However, for ordinary and poverty-stricken people, he was a man to be emulated as a social and religious reformer. Thus, many poor *gabbars* and down trodden people followed him (*ibid*).

The second most important development during *Lij Iyyasu* period was the opening up of Arsiland to Oromolands and Muslim world. Following the above millenarian movement organized by famous religious personalities in the Arsiland there was a revival of Islam and Oromohood in Arsi. Before *Lij Iyyasu's* reign, most Arsi *darasa*, Islamic students used to go for further education to Harar, Dawwe in Wallo, Somalia and from Somalia some of them to the Muslim countries. But during *Lij Iyyasu* time the Arsi *darasa* also began to go in large number to Jimma for further Islamic education. The most important Sheikhs from whom the Arsi *darasa* acquired higher education in Jimma were those of Abbaltti Sheikhs which found in the present Sokoru district. The Sheikhs of Abbaltti by the standard of that time were renowned for the teaching of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and *Nahw* (Arabic grammar). One of the most prominent Sheikhs in Abbaltti, during the period under discussion was Sheikh Aliy Shuro. Most clerics of Arsi Oromo before and during the time of Iyyasu, and the Italian occupation were educated under him

((Informants: Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018; Sheikh Tahir Sheikh Muhammad, 2018; Temam, 2002).

The following anecdote clearly shows us how the Oromo interconnectedness among various Oromo groups and clans grew steadily during *Lij Iyyasu* period. According to Berhanu (2016) and Ketebo (1999), some elites and the common people of Jimma had developed a positive attitude towards Arsi Muslim students who were learning under various Sheikhs in Jimma. The positive attitude developed to them due to a belief during that period that the Arsi Muslim students came from a blessed country of Sheikh Hussein. They were believed to have possessed a special *baraka* (unique spiritual power) transmitted to them through Sheikh Hussein and from the *dargaa* (the protector of Sheikh Hussein shrine found in Anajina). For that reason they gave priority to Arsi Islamic students in Jimma to bless their ceremonies until 1990s. Due to this good relation developed between Arsi and Jimma Oromo, a large number of Jimma Oromo acquainted with Dirre Sheikh Hussein and start to visit since then in large number Dirre Sheikh Hussein also known as Anajina (Informants: Haji Laliso Kawo, 2018 ; Sheikh Tahir Sheikh Muhammad, 2018; Temam, 2002).

From *Lij Iyyasu* onwards a large scale movement of Macha Oromo pilgrims of Jimma and Ilu Aba Bor areas in the name of *muudaa Sheek Huseen* (pilgrims of Sheikh Hussein) regularly visited both Dirre Sheikh Hussein (Anajina) of Bale and to certain extent Sakina, the second shrine of Sheikh Hussein found in the present Arsi zone. The Macha pilgrims trekked on foot on the way to Anajina and Sakina. They carried their provisions with them and held Y-shaped sticks in their hand. Those ardent lovers of Sheikh Hussein were/are traditionally called *Garibaa* from Arabic meaning strangers. Now in Arsiland we have many Jimma and *Garibaa ganda*/settlement even in small villages and towns. In this way the interconnectedness of Arsi Oromo widened during and after *Lij Iyyasu* period. After deposition of *Lij Iyyasu* the Arsi Oromo with Hararghe Oromo and Wollo Oromo tried to restore him to power which clearly shows the depth of interconnectedness of the Oromo people which will be discussed in the coming paragraphs (Informant: Haji Aliy Tolola; Berhanu, 2016; Ketebo, 1999; Temam, 2002).

When the Arsi Oromo heard *Lij Iyyasu* was deposed in *coup d'état* on September 27, 1916 by Shewan elites, particularly the prominent Arsi Sheikhs and *Haxiis* (chiefs) agitated for the immediate restoration of *Lij Iyyasu* to power. This is one of the last important event occurred in Arsi during *Lij Iyyasu* last years. The agitation took the form of a religious and political movement. The Arsi Oromo believed that 'their man' unlawful overthrown due to his Oromo and Islamic backgrounds. Both the Shewans and their foreign supporters alleged that *Lij Iyyasu* supported Ethiopian Muslims and allied himself with Muslim powers like Turkey against the Allied powers during WWI. These two forces came together and succeeded in overthrowing *Lij Iyyasu* on September 27, 1916 while *Lij Iyyasu* was in Jigjiga. When this news heard in Dire Dawa, Jigjiga and Harar people of eastern Ethiopia organized themselves to reverse the coup. The Hararghe peoples hastily organized fighting forces moved to Meiso where they were confronted by *Dajjach* Tefari Mekkonen 15,000 well -armed strong soldiers (Ficquet and Smidt, 2014).

The Arsi Oromo who was the neighbors of Hararghe Oromo also determined to restore *Lij Iyyasu* by force to power by joining their force to fight with the Hararghe Oromo and even with the force of Wollo Oromo. The Arsi Oromo named the hastily organized force *Allahu Da'imu* (comes from Arabic: Allah for God, *Da'im*; eternal, hence Allah is eternal). The notables who organize this movement came from the present districts of Arsi like Amigna, Seru, Robe, Jaju, Golocha, Sude and Chole. The most important persons who involved organizing and providing necessary materials for *Allahu Da'imu* force were Hajj Mohammed Arsi, 'Umar Ture, Haji Hussein Qamme, Sheikh 'Abd al-Latif Abronye, Sheikh Mohammed Gurdama, Sheikh Mahmud Mazaza, Sheikh Ahmad Sheikh Chome, and others ((Informant: Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018; Abas, 1982, Temam, 2002).

Moreover, these Sheikhs and Chiefs also encouraged their clans and *darasa* for action against the anti-Iyyasu groups in Arsi itself. *Allah Da'imu* force that was ready to march to Mi'esso in Hararghe was equipped with traditional weapons, some with a few rifles while the sheikhs armed with *tasbih* (rosary). Even though logistically they were not well-armed but spiritually they armed with was a high morale and spirit of being Oromo and Muslim. The recruits to this force mainly came from religious class and *haxxis* (chiefs). Moreover, at the same time people in various areas in the then Arsi province rebelled and began to destroy the property of the exploitative class

members, the best and well-known rebellion was Hella rebellion in the present Sirka district of Arsi zone (Abas, 1982, 2002). In Bale in different parts like Gindhir, Dallo, Anajina and etc. also people revolted and refused to recognize the new regime. The principal leader of *Allahu Da'imu* movement in Arsi was Kabir Manza Mamme. Kabir Manza Mamme with the above Arsi religious leader and chiefs marched with his volunteer army first to Charchar then to Mi'eso to join with Hararghe Oromo forces where Iyyasu was organizing his force in October 1916 (*ibid*).

The eastern part of Arsi particularly the lowland part of Amigna district which bordering west Hararghe locally known as Elelle is the center of Islamic learning for a thousand years. Due to the proximity of Elelle to Hararghe (where the idea of restoring *Lij Iyyasu* to power by force was strong), it became a focal point for organized opposition against the overthrow of *Lij Iyyasu*. It is here at Sakina, the second biggest and influential shrine of Sheikh Hussein is found. It was at Sakina that the Arsi sheikhs, chiefs and ordinary people used to gather twice a year to discuss matters of common interests. As I.M. Lewis rightly stated the shrine of Sheikh Hussein was not only the center of Islamic education but also the center of political agitation against the central government (Lewis, 1980).

As mentioned above, the Arsi Oromo had a high affection for *Lij Iyyasu* because during his era the living conditions of the *gabbars* were improved (as the following well-known Oromo women *weddu* for cattle in Arsiland indicate, *asrat* (tithe) collection improved), Islam expanded, and Qur'anic schools were opened in many places like Sirka, Gadab and Albaso. *Lij Iyyasu's* close relation with the Arsi Oromo is epitomized by a widespread saying in Arsi that *Lij Iyyasu* was a liberal ruler if he was allowed to rule for a long time he would dismantle the *naftagna* (a kind of lord-peasant serfdom) system and restore the freedom and dignity of Oromo and Muslims. Furthermore, he was considered by the most Arsi Oromo as one who encouraged Islamic education particularly in eastern Arsi, where the idea of restoring *Lij Iyyasu* by force was strong. During his reign, one of the *jallalloo* (lovers) of Sheikh Hussein admired Iyyasu's contribution to the expansion of Islam and the building of mosques as follows.

Yaa Iyyaasuu Abbaa Jilchoo

Masgiida goote Katamaa Xiichoo (Baaroo hymn)

English translation:

Oh! Iyyasu, who is highly feared and abhorred by the enemies,

You made Ticho (the then capital of Arsi) the center of mosques.

The following popular *wedduu* poems also glorify Iyyasu as the lovers of Muslims and poor *gabbars* unlike the rulers before him.

Iyyaasiyyo Sheeka mataa waafaa.

Yoo abet jidhanin garaa laafaa.

Zanama kee wal hinajjefnee gadoo.

Itti cuffee deemee hiyyesaa badoo (Baaroo hymn)

English translation:

My Iyyasu, who has a long hair

To petitions he listens with patience

During your reign there was no vengeance for killings

He disappeared abandoning the helpless poor.

There was a rumor in Arsi that Iyyasu was restored to power by the combined forces of Arsi, Hararghe and Wollo Oromo. Hearing this rumor an Arsi woman expressed her joy in the following way:

Yaa Saayyawo Iyyasun galee

Dheedi naasu malee (weddu looni, praise song for cattle)

English translation:

Oh! My cattle, Iyyasu has returned.

Thus, my cattle now graze without any fear.

Frustrated at the disruption of peace and security, the challenge to *naftagna* power, and the destruction of some churches, the Arsi governor-general, *Ras Kabbada Mangasha*, from his center Ticho (a capital city of Arsi until 1944 when Asella replaced it) organized a military force to crush the *Allahu Da'imu* movement in Eelle that began marching to Haraghe and the Sirka rebellion in Arsi itself. He also received reinforcements from the regime now installed in the place of *Lij Iyyasu*. While Kabir Manza Mamme was in Hararghe with some notables to coordinate with Hararghe forces, *ras Kabbada Mangasha* through his bolstered force from Shewa easily crushed both the remain *Allah Dai'mu* movement ready to march to Hararghe and the Sirka

rebellion in October 1916. It was again lack of firearms that led to the collapse of the movement. The following couplet confirms this idea:-

*Iyyaasiyyoo kiyya abba xeenaa.
Wonti takkaan natti hafte seenaan.
Wonti takkaan natti hafte qaw'ee,
Worri Awuseen akkanaamuu jawe'ee (Baaroo hymn)*

English translation:

My Iyyasu Abba Tena
One thing I regret not having
One thing I lack is arms
As family of Sheikh Hussein's is brave as constrictor
We can fight [for you] have lacking it

Shiferaw Bekele (2014), one of the famous Ethiopianist recently acknowledged that there were revolts and agitation against the overthrow of *Lij Iyyasu* in many places in Arsi land including Gindhir, Dallo, Sirka and *Allahu Da'imu* movement in eastern Arsi. He also acknowledged that the Arsi forces tried to organize insurrection with Hararghe Oromo in support of *Lij Iyyasu* who was then in Mi'esso. He also concludes that folk couplets and poems from Arsi show the popularity of *Lij Iyyasu* in Arsi and even the Arsi Oromo chiefs sent delegates to Hararghe to coordinate the attack. However, when the Arsi force reached Charchar and Miesso *Lij Iyyasu* force led by *Dajjasmach* Gugsu was already defeated at Mi'esso on Sunday, 8 October 1916. In Addis Ababa following *Lij Iyyasu* overthrow, Zewditu, the daughter of Menelik became the empress while *Dajjach* Tefari Mekonnen, the future emperor Haile Selassie I, the arch-enemy of *Lij Iyyasu* became regent. Later *Lij Iyyasu* was caught and imprisoned first in Fiche and then in Gurawa, Garamul'ata from in 1932. When the Italian invaded the country in 1935 Haile Selassie I feared that the Italians might restore *Lij Iyyasu* to power and then he ordered his bodyguard to bring him to Addis Ababa in 1936. From 1936 onwards *Lij Iyyasu* kept at prison in Siddist kilo campus. The last action taken by fleeing monarch, Haile Selassie I, following his defeat at the hand of Fascist Italy force at Maichew in March 1936 was the murdering of *Lij Iyyasu*. The Wollo people also tried to restore *Lij Iyyasu* to power but they like Arsi and Hararghe Oromo also

failed at the battle of Sagale in October 1916 (Informants: Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018; Haji Aliy Tolola, 2018; Bahru, 1991).

After the failure of the Hararghe, Arsi and Wollo Oromo forces to restore *Lij Iyyasu* to power by force at Mi'esso and Sagale, the Arsi Oromo lamented heavily the overthrow of *Lij Iyyasu* by those who hate Muslim and Oromo. They also lamented that the lack of coordination and organization was the main reason for their failure. The following couplets which composed after the overthrow of *Lij Iyyasu* by Arsi Oromo could demonstrate the extent of the Arsi Oromo hatred towards the combined rule of Empress Zewditu and *Dajjach* Tefari Mekonnen imposed on them by comparing the time of the diarchy and that of *Lij Iyyasu* in contrasting colors (Informants: Sheikh Muhammad Kabir Sani, 2018: Haji Laliso Kawo, 2018).

Afaan Oromoo

English translation

<i>Warraa nyaatee gabbaatee ciisuu siree</i>	Those who had satisfied and rest well
<i>Rabbiin guddaan sittii gabaabse hiree</i>	The Great God had hindered their desires
<i>Warraa hiyyeessa nyaatee fixaatee</i>	Those who had taken away all the property of the poor
<i>Rumiichii daallachii Walloo hifaatee</i>	The vulture of Wollo had eaten them up completely
<i>Baaburaa oofee olifagessee hawaa</i>	He who had great ambitions
<i>Yomaa lachuu hirribaa dhorgee Shawaa</i>	<i>Lij Iyyasu</i> humiliated the Shewans
<i>Nu yoo kenna gabbaaranuu duunee</i>	According to our perception they would demanded more
<i>Warri waan nu heeduu gaduu hinfunee</i>	They did not bring yet all measures they wanted to implement
<i>Lafa abbaan itti asi deema jiraa</i>	Your whole land would be taken soon
<i>Ofumaan deemta biraa</i>	But they will not succeed by force
<i>Iyyaasiyoo millii lachu kuffii</i>	Our <i>Iyyasu</i> who wore shoes with socks but they did not
<i>Zoowditu moosisaan jaarti kufrii</i>	They installed Zewditu the unbeliever
<i>Iyyaasiyoo beela baraa nurraa kafta</i>	Our <i>Iyyasu</i> who overcame famine by his good policy
<i>Warraa Walloo jalaa areedaa risaa</i>	The Wallo people was accompanied by eagle
<i>Moosisaan Tafaari kilaafa isaa</i>	They installed Tafari his arch enemy
<i>Tafaari daalachaa garaa najisaa</i>	He, Tefari the wicked

After the suppression of the Arsi revolt and *Allahu Da'imu* movement in October 1916 some of the local people in the eastern Arsi became *shifita* (bandits) led by Kabir Manza Mamme until 1929, when he launched a *jihad* against the local government. This also failed because a number of local chiefs and *balabbats* were not fully committed to the struggle and were afraid of being easily defeated due to lack of firearms. Kabir Manza Mamme's force was thus disbanded and the

organizers directed their energies to the preaching of Islam. It is said, however, that the remnants of this force later joined the Italians in 1937.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion shows that *Lij Iyyasu* reforms and policies introduced during his rule were positively accepted by the Arsi Oromo. The Arsi Oromo liked and admired *Lij Iyyasu* period than any rulers in Ethiopia for many reasons. For instance, *Lij Iyyasu*'s ethnic and religious backgrounds were some of the apparent reasons for the Arsi Oromo identification with him. The founder of the Mammadoch dynasty of Wollo was originally from the Arsi Oromo, *Iyyasu*'s father was also Oromo and a Muslim before 1878. *Iyyasu*'s regular visit to Arsi chiefs and merchants in Adama, his visit to Hararghe and Jimma, his marriage to Oromo and Muslim chiefs whom the Arsi Oromo identified as their Muslim and Oromo brothers. This was also another factor which made *Iyyasu* to be loved and admired by the Arsi Oromo. Due to these factors, the Arsi Oromo began to express their cultural and socio-religious practices openly than before during 'their man'.

It was for this reasons that some religious leaders who got morale and freedom during *Iyyasu*'s period began to encourage their followers in a kind of socio-religious movement akin to a millenarian movement. The best examples of these movement leaders were *Sayyid* Roba Garbi and Haji Sura who helped the poor Arsi to revitalize their livelihoods in different mechanisms. The opening up of Arsiland to Muslim and Oromo world was another gain the Arsi Oromo achieved during *Lij Iyyasu* rule. It was not only the Arsi Oromo as a people who got more freedoms but also their cattle. It was in this liberalism and optimism mood that the Arsi Oromo heard the overthrow of *Lij Iyyasu* by combined forces of Shewan elites and Allied powers in September 1916. The elites of Arsi Oromo did not sit ideal when they heard this news. Hence, some of the religious leaders and chiefs armed with both a few materials and high morale marched in the name of *Allahu Da'imu* movement towards Hararghe where *Lij Iyyasu* was organizing his forces. In some places in Arsiland also revolts erupted. Again as it happened during Menelik period the lack of firearms was the main reason behind the failure of the movement and the revolts.

Lastly, this study concludes by saying that the concept of center-periphery and win-defeat historical narration in which the winner will take all while the defeat will get nothing should also be discarded when writing the history of all Ethiopian peoples. Historical writing in Ethiopian should not only be left to the people of the center and winner forces but also it should equally involve the people of periphery and the ones who lost the battle during various Ethiopian rulers. It was when this transformative approach in history writing followed by historians that the all-inclusive history of Ethiopian people will be written and consequently then all Ethiopian peoples, nations and nationalities identified themselves with Ethiopian state where everybody will be treated equally and live peacefully in their country.

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