



The picture shows Prince Iyasu (1913-1916) as successful lion hunter. The hunting of lions was considered one of the chief tasks of the ruler. These animals stood in symbolical relationship with the authority of the state (compare a sobriquet of the Emperor: Lion of Juda; lion in the coat of arms of the state; tame lions in the palace, before the Emperor's throne etc.).

The Prince is mounted on a splendidly harnessed horse. Iyasu's headdress (anfaro) resembles a crown. It consists of a ring of silver or gold sheeting decorated with tooled and hammered ornaments and set with semi-precious stones. Jewels (or beads or miniature bells?) hang from small chains fastened to the lower edge of the fillet. Around the ring are stiff, upright-standing hairs from a lion's mane. This headdress is laced by means of green, yellow and red bands (the colors of the national flag).

Around his shoulders the Prince wears a type of cape (lambd). It is made from a lion's skin and several bands of red Indian velvet. These bands have been decorated with gold embroidery and metal paillettes. The cape is held together at the breast by a gilded clasp covered with filigree work. Above this clasp Iyasu is wearing an order of merit (European?).

Beneath the lambd Iyasu is wearing a green and yellow striped shirt (qamis) similar to a caftan, reaching to his knees. White trousers (suri) complete his dress. Following the Ethiopian custom Iyasu has only his big toe in the stirrup. His weapons consist of spear and a ceremonial lance which he carries crosswise over his saddle. On the socket of the lance is a short cross bar so that the upper end takes on the form of a cross. This documents Iyasu's affiliation with Christianity. The twofold armament, spear and lance, was the privilege of the aristocracy. Moreover, in painting it was a typical feature of the so-called mounted saints (St. George, etc.). In his left hand Iyasu is holding a round, richly ornamented umbo shield. A mortally wounded lion is lying beneath the horse.

Coates 1909: 13-15.

Prouty and Rosenfeld 1981: 132-133.

Rohrer 1932.

War and hunting were held in similarly high esteem in Ethiopia so that warriors and hunters received emblems of distinction from the Emperor. The following of these precious and, in part, rare distinctions are, fortunately, to be found in the collection of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart: