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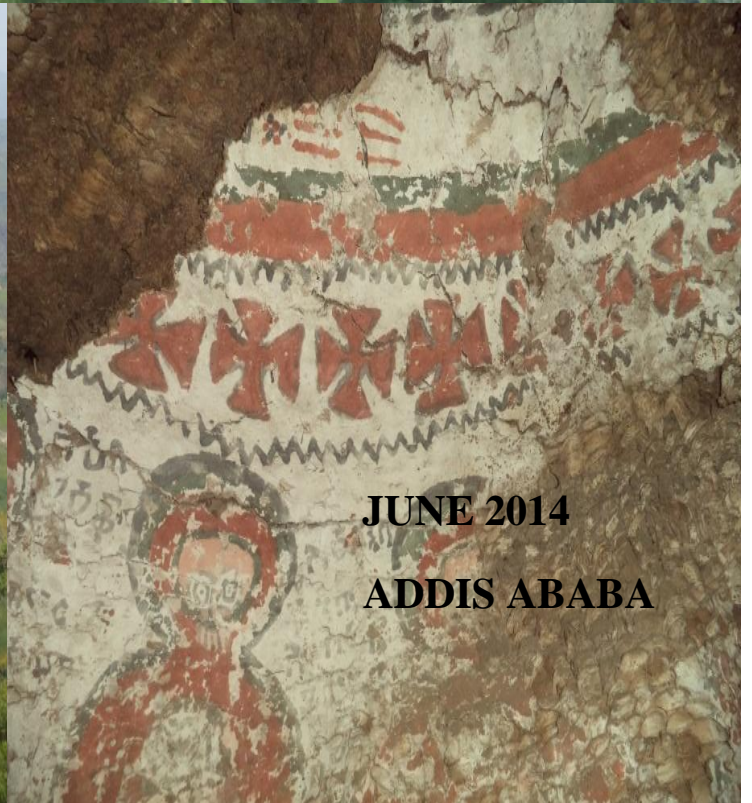
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

A SURVEY OF ROCK HEWN CHURCHES

IN MÄQÉT WÄRÄDA, NORTH WÄLLO

BY
TSEGAYE EBABEY



JUNE 2014

ADDIS ABABA

A survey of Rock Hewn Churches in Mäqét Wäräda

**A SURVEY OF ROCK HEWN CHURCHES
IN MÄQÉT WÄRÄDA, NORTH WÄLLO**

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THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES OF ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

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BY

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tsegaye Ebabey entitled: *A Survey of Rock Hewn Churches in Mäqét Wäräda, Northern Wällo* and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts (Archaeology) complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality:

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Abstract

A Survey of Rock Hewn Churches in Mäqét Wäräda, North Wällo

Tsegaye Ebabey

Addis Ababa University, 2014

The rock hewn churches of Mäqét roughly cover the time between the 4th and 14th centuries A.D based on traditional sources. This dating is not reliable without tangible archeological sources and future researches are expected to provide archaeological sources to discuss the detail of their chronology. The churches are cave and monolithic hewn rocks in type. No built up churches are found in the Wäräda. The tradition of the Wäräda is cave oriented which might be influenced by the nature and setting of the rocks in which the churches are hewed.

These churches are hidden behind the escarpments, mountains or hills of Mäqét. They are built in the inaccessible areas of Mäqét that isolated the churches from heritage managers and researchers. They have common and unique architectural features and cultural heritages. The churches are recognized by their unique architectures, locally produced hand craft materials, and by other essential movable treasures in many of the churches.

The architectures of the churches resemble dominantly indigenous technologies. The tradition of the Wäräda is claimed to be the base for the later rock hewn church development of the country, by recognizing the churches as parts of the early Aksumite Christian traditions. Suspiciously, there are some features such as basilica styles and domes which might be adapted from the early Byzantine Christian traditions probably introduced by Abunä Musé. The churches have intangible heritages which are significant by their spiritual, socio-cultural and economic manifestations of the people which need future detail studies.

Despite this, the heritage management and tourism activities of the churches are challenged by both natural and anthropogenic related problems. This research indicated the need of further detail studies concerning the management and conservation of these churches.

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List of Acronyms

ARCCH	Authority for Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage
CBT	Community based tourism
CHM	Cultural Heritage Management
CSA	Central Statistical Agency.
CTHEs	Community Tourism Hosting Enterprises
CTFEs	Community Tourism Food Enterprises
EOTC	Ethiopian Orthodox <i>Täwahdo</i> Church
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GPS	Global Positioning System
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
MWGAC	Mäqét <i>Wäräda</i> Government Affairs Communication Office
a. s. l	above sea level
TESFA	Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UTM	Universal Transverse Mercator

Key to Transliterations System

The seven orders of the Ethiopic alphabet:

Order	Symbolic Representation	Examples	
1 st order- <i>ge'ez</i>	ä	<i>wäräda</i>	ወረዳ
2 nd order- <i>ka'eb</i>	u	<i>wudmaw</i>	ውድማው
3 rd order- <i>śals</i>	i	<i>fiṭawurari</i>	ፊታውራሪ
4 th order- <i>rab'e</i>	a	<i>qana</i>	ቃና
5 th order- <i>hams</i>	é	<i>bét</i>	ቤት
6 th order- <i>sads</i>	ə	<i>qəddəst</i>	ቅድስት
7 th order- <i>sab'e</i>	o	<i>Abbo</i>	አቦ

Consonants	Symbols	Examples	
ሰ	S	<i>Sälama</i>	ሰላማ
ሠ	Ś	<i>Śällas</i>	ሠላስ
ሸ	Sh	<i>Shädäho</i>	ሸደሆ
ቀ	q	<i>qäbälé</i>	ቀበሌ
ቸ	č	<i>mäqännäčä</i>	መቀነቻ
ኘ	gn	<i>gragn</i>	ግራኝ
ጆ	j	<i>Dasnja</i>	ዳስንጃ
ዠ	ž	<i>Žəṭa</i>	ጃጥ
ጠ	t	<i>Tämbäqot</i>	ጠምበቆት
ጬ	ç	<i>Çäçäho</i>	ጬጬሆ
ጸ/ፀ	Ş	<i>şünaşəl</i>	ጸናጽል
ጺ	p	<i>Pistis</i>	ጺስጢስ
ኳ	kua	<i>Mäkkuat</i>	መኳት
ቋ	qua	<i>mäquamiya</i>	መቋሚያ

Glossary of Amharic and *Ge'ez* Terms

<i>Abun</i>	Father, a title given to a bishop, higher church man
<i>Abunä</i>	Our father
<i>aqəgniwoch</i>	rulers who first inhabited a new area
<i>azmari</i>	minstrel
<i>atamo</i>	small drum, having one side of playing
<i>bäträ mäsqäl</i>	a crossed shaped staff
<i>bä'alä nəgs</i>	annual ceremony of saints
<i>çəra</i>	fly-swatter
<i>däbr/dabrä</i>	mount/ mount of-
<i>däga</i>	highland
<i>däjjach</i>	traditional military rank, below <i>ras</i>
<i>dabo</i>	bread
<i>enjära</i>	a <i>flat bread</i> (known only in Ethiopia)
<i>equb</i>	self help association
<i>eqa bét</i>	treasury keeper in a church
<i>fitawurari</i>	Commander of the vanguard, a traditional military title below <i>däjjach</i> .
<i>gädäl</i>	miracle
<i>gädam</i>	monastery
<i>gätär</i>	rural, country side
<i>gəb'atä mäntola'et</i>	a space along the masking of the throne, between the holy and the sanctuary
<i>gänna çäwata</i>	male's field traditional playing during the time of Christmas
<i>gité çäwata</i>	male's traditional game in the weekend of Eastern, in and around Mäqät
<i>gragn</i>	left handed
<i>gudəb</i>	an excavating material used by <i>Abunä Aron</i> , like a small ax
<i>hawarya</i>	apostle

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<i>käbäro</i>	a drum with two opposite sides of playing
<i>laméra</i>	<i>a hard thin used to cover an entrance</i>
<i>mänkrawi</i>	admirable
<i>mahbärä</i>	association of-
<i>mäqännächa</i>	a horizontal girdle curved around walls or columns
<i>mänbär/mänabärt</i>	throne/thrones
<i>məqwamä anəst</i>	anterooms of females
<i>mäquwamiya</i>	staff stick
<i>nägarit</i>	a big drum with one side playing,
<i>qättin</i>	thin
<i>qäbälé</i>	locality
<i>qəddəst</i>	holy
<i>qəddəst qəddusan</i>	holies of holy
<i>qənə mahlét</i>	chanting place
<i>qolla</i>	tropical
<i>qərə</i>	local association formed around a parish to help each other mainly during mourning
<i>quṭr</i>	the lowest church education level
<i>ras</i>	head, a title given military ruler, below the king
<i>səqurät</i>	an excavated opening used for the entrance of light
<i>Şänaşəl</i>	sistrum
<i>Şəbah</i>	morning
<i>tabot/tabotat</i>	ark/arks
<i>tamari</i>	a church student
<i>täwahədo</i>	Unionist
<i>Wäradä</i>	district
<i>wäyina däga</i>	temperate

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis, *A Survey of Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqét Wäräda, North Wällo*, is accomplished taking many times of preparation and process. It takes costs starting from the finding of written literatures to the field works, analysis and discussion of the collection of the data. Regardless of the costs I have paid during the field work that was conducted in three term of trips, the study has come across with new and significant discussion of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäräda in comparison with other rock hewn churches of the country.

The research is organized in to five chapters. The First Chapter deals with the introductory of the study and its methodological part. The general background of the Wäräda including the physical, geological and economic aspects are presented in Chapter Two. The introduction of Christianity in the area and the tradition of rock hewn churches of the country are also considered under this chapter.

Chapter Three opens one part: the presentation of rock hewn churches of the Wäräda. The Fourth Chapter also deals with the discussion of the data, chronology and tradition of the rock hewn churches is discussed in this chapter. The last chapter is designed to conclude the study and to recommend specific issues of the rock hewn churches.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The construction of churches from rocks had become a fascinated culture during the expansion of Christianity in Ethiopia. It is mentioned that there are some 300 rock hewn sanctuaries distributed in Ethiopia's rugged landscape testament to a religious tradition. Within these structures are treasures of religious art, many of them in near pristine condition-murals depicting saints and scenes from the life of Christ; illuminated Gospels and Psalters written in Geez; and complicated processional crosses shaped in gold and silver (Schuster 1994).

The above numbers of the rock churches mentioned by Schuster does not show the exact number of churches built in the country since there are various unstudied rock churches. Most of the rock hewn churches are built in the hills, mountains and escarpments which are more concentrated in the northern highland areas of the country. There is variation in the way that the rock churches detached from the main rock, the style and system of excavation and architectures of the churches (Gerster 1970; Schuster 1994; Phillipson 2009).

The rock hewn churches of Mäqét *Wäräda* were not considered by researchers. This makes the churches isolated in the general discussion of rock hewn churches of Ethiopia that initiated me to do this study. At the beginning, I visited some of the churches when I was attending my elementary and high school education. Moreover, I have a great interest to study these churches in which I can access sanctuaries of the churches to gain a direct data of the churches.

This study discusses these rock churches are included under the rock hewn cave and monolithic churches, in which the tradition is cave oriented, with suspicions upon some churches. All of the churches have differences and similarities by their planning and architectural application among themselves and with other rock hewn churches of the country.

1.2 Review of Literatures

The rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäradä are neither visited by researchers nor recorded in previous literatures which shows the gap of research in the rock hewn churches of the area. Only the monastery of Abunä Aron is recorded narrowly in some literatures. The other churches are not mentioned in any literatures even by name. Buxton (1947) has recorded the name, *Däbrä Qättin*, excavated by Abunä Aron. The Monastery of Abunä Aron (Aron Mänkrawi), near *Däbrä Qättin*, is mentioned by Wright who narrowly recorded some cave churches found in Wällo Province. Wright stated his surprising about the rock-cut monastery of Abunä Aron as follow:

...it was pouring with rain, without being touched by a single drop of water, although there was nothing between his head and the sky. This prodigy was now recounted to me on the spot (Wright 1957: pp. 8-9).

Taddesse (1972) has indicated that Abunä Aron become a monk due to the presence of monastic activities in Hayq and latter in *Däbrä Asbo*. The Abun had started to build a new rock hewn church and settled himself and his followers at *Däbrä Qättin*. Taddesse has stated about *Däbrä Qättin* as follow:

*We have already seen how, after some wandering in Tigre and Lasta, Aron finally established himself at *Däbrä Qättin*. The site was on a hill overlooking the eastern bank of the Täkäzzé on its upper course immediately west of Lalibela. Aron and his followers built a church and settled in what is today the south-eastern corner of Beggemdir (Taddesse 1972: p. 193).*

There are also some accounts indicating about the life of Abunä Aron and the names of the churches he founded in addition to *Däbrä Qättin* and *Däbrä Darét* such as *Däbrä Maryam* at Guna (Uhlig 2003). Moreover, despite the potentials of the Wäradä for the development of Community Based Tourism (CBT), little is done to develop the activity. Some insights have been provided by Gebeyaw (2011) and Kidanemariam (2012) showing the good starting of eco-tourism activities for the local society, though do not showing any links of the CBT with the rock hewn churches of Mäqét. They partially indicated the natural and cultural potentials of the Wäradä for the development of CBT activity in the area.

There are several rock hewn churches in the neighboring district of Gayönt, Wadla and Dawnt. Phillipson(2009) indicates that the rock hewn churches in Amhara less survived than in Tigray. It is definitely by missing several numbers of unvisited churches in the

areas of the region outside of Lasta. There is no previous works in these churches to mention here, which creates a clear missing gap to document, conserve and promote the churches.

All over, the issue invites archaeologists to add something value by assuming the untouched and virgin issues in archaeology and heritage management rock hewn churches of Ethiopia. At this level, this research come across with the first organized survey and documentation of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét furnished by discussions of the churches in comparison with the rock hewn churches of Lasta and Tigray as well as the un-researched rock hewn churches of the neighboring districts, to fill the missing gaps of research activities of the *Wäradä*.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the availability of a considerable number of rock hewn churches in the country, the studies previously conducted are very limited, to assess all areas of the country with rock hewn churches.

Most of the previous studies conducted on rock hewn churches of Ethiopia are those of foreigners' accounts. The studies conducted by Ethiopian researchers are very limited. This is mainly because of lack of professionals, organized institutions and finance to run studies on rock hewn churches of the country. As a result, it generally difficult to identify, conserve and promote most of the rock hewn churches of the country.

Unlike the number of rock hewn churches in Mäqét, researchers do not visit and conduct a study on the churches. The churches are not documented, conserved, promoted and researched at all. The types, architectures and the current statuses of the churches are not yet studied. The treasures found in the churches are also not documented. Moreover, researchers' discussion of the rock hewn church tradition of the country did not consider these churches.

In nut shell, the basic problems that initiated me to conduct this study are: Firstly, there is no surveying activity conducted by researchers in Mäqét. Secondly, there is no documentation activities performed on the rock churches of the *Wäradä*. Thirdly, there is

no scholarly recommendation given upon the local conservation conducted on the rock churches. Finally, the activities made to promote the churches are very limited.

Under this study, the following questions are raised:

- ✚ How many number of rock hewn churches are found in Mäqét Wäräda?
- ✚ What are the major architectures of the churches and their comparison among the churches of the Wäräda and other rock hewn churches of the country?
- ✚ What are the existing situations to deal with the dating, tradition and continuity issues of the rock hewn churches in the context of the rock hewn church tradition of the country?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The core objective of this study is to carry out a pioneering comprehensive survey and documentation of the rock hewn churches in Mäqét Wäräda.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives intended to achieve in the study are:

- ✓ To survey and record the rock hewn churches of the Wäräda.
- ✓ To discuss the origin, chronology and continuity of tradition of the rock hewn churches of the Wäräda.
- ✓ To commend the challenges of heritage management and conservation of the churches

1.5 Significance of the Study

Research in the field of archaeology and heritage management is one of its practical issues on the field based on the blue print of its theoretical framework. The field of archaeology, since it is a broad discipline, is concerned in the development of theories in heritage management (Price *et al.* 1996). Of course, archaeology is both theory and practice (Hodder 1995; Lozny 2006) which means it addresses not only the theoretical aspects and archaeological evidences in the fieldwork but also the management and conservation issues, too (Grant *et al.* 2008). As a pioneering work, the significance of this study is not questionable. Actually, it is done based on the theoretical

frameworks I have learned in the classroom and by reading different written materials in relation to the study.

In nut shell, this study will be very crucial for the following aspects. The study:

- Will be used as a pioneering comprehensive document about Mäqét *Wäräda's* rock hewn churches and the cultural heritages found in the churches.
- Will be important to introduce the rock hewn churches to the society in and abroad.
- Will provide an insight to the need of conservation activities of the endangered heritages by integrating the professionals and the local communities' knowledge.
- Will provide a supportive idea to the origin and the continuation of the tradition of rock hewn churches of the country.
- Will be important for those who want to invest in the area to develop eco-tourism, socio-cultural interaction and coexistence at local and national levels
- Will be a base for future studies for researchers and decision makers.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Even though there are many un-researched rock hewn churches in the neighboring districts, time and financial issues delimited this study to be concentrated only in Mäqét *Wäräda*, North Wällo. There are various cultural heritages including rock and non rock hewn ancient churches, historical battle fields, and other socio-cultural heritages. But the study is looks at the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda*. It is concerned with the study of 19 rock hewn churches which are unevenly distributed in 12 localities of the *Wäräda*.

The time variation of construction of the churches is not a matter for the churches to be included under this study, based on local sources, roughly it covers from 4th to 14th century AD. The recently built rock church of Wärq Washa Giyorgis is not included in the study due to its un-recognition by the *Wäräda's* cultural tourism office and the priesthood as a result of its endangered situation; it is only treated, at this level, for the purpose to show the continuity of tradition of rock hewn churches in the *Wäräda*.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét *Wäräda* is very indispensable in relation to its findings. Unlike this, I have faced the following constraints somewhat challenged the normal

flow of the research. Firstly, financial constraint is the major problem which affected the effective accomplishment of the study. Regardless of the budget I had, the study demanded three terms of trips: the 1st trip in August/2013, the 2nd trip b/n September & October/2013 & the 3rd trip in January 2014. Though I have conducted these trips, I was not lucky to arrive at Yädbba Maryam in Dawnt Wäräda which is said to be the rest of Abunä Musé.

Secondly, I could not get all the necessary information of the churches. Some church men could not allow me to visit the tangible heritages found in the churches. I could not allow entering in the church of Amsalä Kərstos Mädhane Aläm, at all, due to the theft problems appeared in the church. It is during my third trip in January/2014 that the general data of this church has been gathered. Some church men also didn't allow me to enter in the sanctuary. It is also forbidden to enter the sanctuary for other activities after liturgy is finished.

Thirdly, the ridged mountain terrains are difficult for travelling. I traveled more than 305km of ups and downs to approach each church, which for the time being tired me physically. Through the journey, I have faced hunger. Above all, the absence of both local and research based written sources was the core challenge of this study.

1.8 Methodology of the Study

Research design is needed to facilitate the smooth flow of research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money (Kothary 2004). The following methodologies facilitated this study.

1.8.1 Pre-field Data Acquisition

Before the beginning of the research, I have gathered the necessary data related to the study of rock hewn churches from previous works. The related literatures are gathered from AAU Libraries, ARCCH Museum, documents of Mäqét Wäräda offices, and reliable websites. This helped me to identify whether there are several or little studies conducted in the area as well as to identify the gaps existed in the previous literatures. After identifying the gaps, this study has been conducted to address the gaps identified.

1.8.2 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is one of the very important parts in the research methodologies (Sapsfords & Jupp 2006; Kultar 2007). It helps to control and measure the reliability of a data during the process of investigation (Fagan 1994). The sampling technique of this study is held purposefully. The samples of informants nominated within the society and other concerned bodies based on the criteria of age, sex and experiences. The informants selected based on these criteria provided genuine data for the conduct of the study.

Unfortunately, most of my informants are males, including one female alone. My intention to involve approximated participation of females is not successful. No females could be suggested for interview during my discussion to nominate the informants except in the church of Aqqat Marqos. It shows that the participation of females within the affairs of the churches is very poor. 38 informants are selected. The informants are selected from the communities (35), cultural and tourism officers of the area (1), police members of the *Wäradā* (1), prisoners in case of heritages issues (1).

Interview questionnaires are prepared and the informants interviewed through appointment. To gain a valuable data, I was capable, systematic and ready for recording or writing notes. The samples of rocks of each churches is taken from the external part of the churches.

From 45 localities of the *Wäradā*, 13 localities are selected where the rock hewn churches of the *Wäradā* are unevenly distributed. *Qäbälé* 04 (*Däbrä Kärbé*), 010 (*Aymat*), 022(*Aqqat*), 25(*Ṭajja*), 029(*Hamusit*) and 034(*Dänkänna*) have two rock hewn churches each. In *qäbälé* 01(*Kurissa*), 013(*Wärkayyā*), 015(*Zəbé*), 019(*Wäqéṭa*), 028(*Ṭəmtəmat*), 033(*Estaysh*) and 043(*Dänkänna*), one rock hewn church is located in each.

1.8.3 Procedures and Instruments of Data Collection

After stating the problems of the study, procedures, instruments and methods of data collection are to be conducted (Kothary 2004). Based on the timeline of the study, the necessary data collection procedure is outlined and the data of the study is collected through intensive process of data collection methods including observation, photographing, interview, taking notes, recordings, and document analysis. The relevant data collection of the study is conducted by

using the following methods and instruments: surveying, direct observation, GPS, photo-camera, interview and electronic recordings, and document analysis.

1.8.3.1 Surveying

The simplest way to gain some idea of a cultural site's extent and layout is through a site surface survey (Renfrew & Bahn 2008). It is an essential process to locate, show, document and understand the cultural heritages of the studying area. The process requires travelling on foot to arrive in the sites. Footwork is important to gain a firsthand data (Fagan 1994). That is why I did the survey and the record by arriving on the areas of the *Wäräda* where the rock hewn churches located.

1.8.3.2 Direct observation and Photographing

Observation involves watching, of course, but information from sight is supported by that received through sensing: hearing, smelling, touching, etc (Sapsford & Jupp 2006). During direct observation times, I have used photo- camera to catch up photographs of the studying features. The observation was supported by taking series notes. Through photographing, I have gathered significant data which was missed or forgotten by other means.

1.8.3.3 GPS

GPS is an important instrument for archaeologists to measure the location of a certain site. It helps to locate and record the elevation and the UTM coordination of sites under study (Wiseman 2007). I have recorded all sites under the study. For this, I held enough batteries capable to charge the GPS.

1.8.3.4 Document Analysis

While deciding about the method of data collection to be used for the study, the researcher should keep in mind two types of data: primary and secondary (Kothary, 2004), essentially treated in this study. For a deep understanding of the studying issue, related written materials such as books, articles, journals, etc, and the primary data gathered in the field work are composed and analyzed.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Procedures

The data, after collection, has to be processed and analyzed in accordance with the outline laid down for the purpose at the time of developing the research plan (Kothary 2004). Having this understanding and based on the work plan, I analyzed the collected data by using qualitative data analyzing method.

CHAPTER TWO

2. PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY AREA

Assessing the general issues of the natural and environmental settings of Mäqét; the historical background, the socio-cultural and economic activities of the people; and the introduction and expansion of Christianity, in turn, which accelerated the development of rock hewn church construction of the country has a great relevance to draw a clear picture of the study of rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda*. These issues have directly or indirectly related impacts upon the settlement of the people, the introduction and expansion of Christianity and the beginning of the rock hewn church building in the *Wäräda*.

2.1 Natural and Environmental Settings of the Area

2.1.1 Physical Setting of the Area

Mäqét *Wäräda* (also called Shädäho-Mäqét) is one of the ten districts of North Wällo Administrative Zone, in Amhara National Regional State. It is bordered by eight districts: Gubbalafto and Gədan districts in the east, Lay Gayənt and Tach Gayənt districts in the west, Bugəna and Lasta districts in the north as well as Wadla and Dawnt districts in the south. The area of the *Wäräda* covers 191,148 hectares. It is located at 660kms north of Addis Ababa, 220kms north-east of Bahr Dar, 145 kms west of Wäldiya(the zonal capital), and 90kms south-west of Lalibela.¹

It has 45 rural and two urban localities.² The localities of Kurisa (01), Däbrä Kärbé (04), Aymaṭ (010), Wärkayyā (013), Zəbé (015), Wäqéṭa (019), Aqqat(022), Ṭəmtəmat (028), Ṭajja (025), Hamusit (029), Estaysh (033), Dänkänna (034) and Boya (043) are the study sites. It has small towns including Fəlaqit (the capital town of the *Wäräda*), Gärägära (the second urban *qäbälé*), Agrit, Däbrä Zäbiṭ, Wäqéṭa, Arbit, Aqqat, Ṭəmtəmat, Boya, Eəstaysh and Koso Bərr, which are found along Waldiy-Dabra Tabor road or the *Chinese Road*, as it is called locally. The other small towns, Dəbbəkko and Ṭajja, lie along the road that runs from Gashäna (a town in Wadla *Wäräda* lies along the *Chinese Road*) to Lalibela.

¹Yä Mäqət Wäräda Mastawäqiya Wana Şəhfät-bət Press Ena Information Dèsk, “Yä Mäqət Wäräda Aṭaqalay Gäşeta,” (Felaqit, 1998 E.C.), p2.

² *Yä Mäqət Wäräda Yä Mängest Communication Gudayoč Şəhfät-bət Yä Midäya Masfafiya Ena Lemat Yäsera Hidät, “Yä Wärädaçin Gäşeta,” (Felaqit, 2003 E.C.), pp. 1-2.*

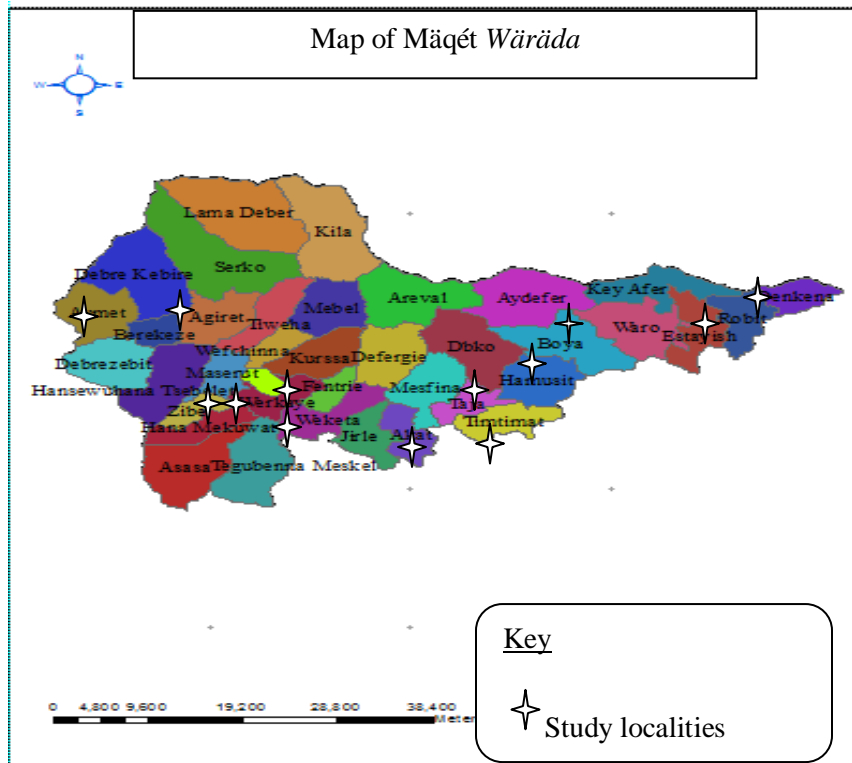


Fig. 2.1 Map of Mäqét Wäräda (Source: N. Wollo GIS Officer)

Mäqét is dissected by enormous mountains, hills, plains and gorges. It has an impressive and rugged topographical setting (McCann 1995). Its 65% of landscape is rugged, 28% is plain and 7% is mountainous. The highest elevation is about 3,589 m a.s.l. in the eastern corner of the *Wäräda*; and the lowest altitude is 1474 m a.s.l, along its adjacent districts of Lasta & Bugəna, in the valley of Täkkäzzé River.³ Most of the altitude of the *Wäräda* ranges between 2,500 and 3200 m a.s.l (Asefa 1989).

The *Wäräda* is characterized by chains of highlands, that run from Bäggəmdər in the west through *Däbrä-Zäbiṭ* to the eastern corner of Mäqét as far as Yäjju and to the head of *Žiṭa* River as far as Wadla and Dälanta. Čäčəho, one of politically the most important center between North Wällo and Bäggəmdər, is a bridge that connected Mäqét and Gondar (Crummey 1975). The soil types are consisted of cambisols, vertisols, lithosols, nethosols, regosols, and rock surface. The first three types of soils are the most dominant covering 57.75%, 15.84% and 11.05% of the total soil types of the *Wäräda*, respectively. The agro-ecological zones can be divided in to *däga* (3000-3589m a.s.l), *wäyna-däga* (2000-3000m.a.s.l), and *qolla* (1000-2000m.a.s.l). The area is existed

³“Yä Wäradäčün Gäšeta,” (Felaqit, 2003 E.C.), p. 1.

in the temperate and highland zones covering 55% & 20% of the agro-ecological zones of the Wäräda, respectively.⁴ Based on the data I have taken during field work, the rock churches included in this study are found between the elevation of 2200 and 3100m a.s.l. Most of them are found in the wäyna dāga/temperate zone of the Wäräda.

The temperature of the Wäräda ranges between 10-20°C. The rainfall also ranges between 700-1000mms. The major rivers of the Wäräda: Därrämo, Tōtabar, Tāj Wuha, Dänsa, Wäynartam and Bäré-Maṭāça are tributaries of Täkkäzzé River that flows across the adjacent areas of Mäqät, Bugəna and Lasta. There are also perennial and non-perennial rivers as well as more than 35 natural springs (Assefa 1989). The forest coverage is 13,400 hectares, 7% of the total area of the Wäräda. The existing forest is unevenly distributed in some localities such as Robit, Dänkäna, Qäy Afär, Tājja, Anjāb, Däbrä Kärbé, Qila, Lama Däbr and Jiröllé.⁵ These areas are dominated by indigenous trees which are mainly protected by the Ethiopian Orthodox Churches in their yards.

No	The names of Indigenous Trees (in Amharic)	Scientific Name
1	Anfar	<i>Buddleja polystachya</i>
2	Azamr	<i>Bersama abyssinica</i>
3	Bāsana	<i>Croton macrostachys</i>
4	Eāmābs	<i>Allophylus abyssinicus</i>
5	Kātkāta	<i>Dodonea viscosa</i>
6	Kosso	<i>Hagenia abyssinica</i>
7	Nāčālo	<i>Vernonia hochstetteri</i>
8	Qārāṭ	<i>Osyris compressa</i>
9	Qurqura	<i>Ziziphus spina-christi</i>
10	Šola	<i>Ficus carica</i>
11	Təqur-ençat	<i>Prunus africanus</i>
12	Wanza	<i>Cordia Africana</i>
13	Warka	<i>Ficus vasta</i>
14	Wäyra	<i>Olea Africana</i>
15	Yä habäsha-şäd	<i>Juniperus procera</i>
16	Zəgba	<i>Podocarpus falcatus</i>

Table 2.1 Some indigenous trees with their identified scientific names found in Mäqät Wäräda (Source: Yä Mäqät Wäräda Yü Täfüṭro Häbet Ena Aṭäqāqām Yäsera Hidät, Wall Graph)

⁴Ibid.

⁵ Yä Mäqät Wäräda Aṭäqalay Gäşeta,” (Felaqit, 1998 E.C), p. 4.

There are also several grass types grown in the *Wäradä* such as *sänbälèt* (*Cymbopogon commutatus*), *särdo* (*Agrostis semiverticillata*), *mujja* (*Snowdenia polystachya*), *qäy-sar* (*Beta vulgaris*) and *gəça* (*Cyperus dischrostachyus*) (Tesfaye 2013). *Sänbälèt* (*Cymbopogon commutatus*) is the most important grass type used for sheltering.

2.1.2 Geological Nature of the Area

The geological nature of the area has left its greater impact on the concentration of rock churches in the Northern part of Ethiopia. The presence of basaltic and sedimentary rocks in the area became the focus of churchmen to hewn churches in these rocks. The existence of different rock churches: both rock hewn and built up churches are prepared mainly in these types of rocks. The different built up cave churches and rock hewn cave and monolithic churches in Lalibela, for example, are evidenced in various literatures.

No previous works are presented indicating the geological nature of the rocks in which the rock churches of Mäqét are built in. Despite that, I think, putting some descriptions on the nature of the rocks of the churches is significant to understand why many numbers of rock hewn churches are located in Mäqét; to consider the manner of the excavation process; and to assess the weathering impacts on the monuments of the churches, which is discussed in the next chapters.

I have brought some samples of rocks from external part of the churches and they are identified by Dr Alemseged Beldados.⁶ According to him, the rocks of the churches of Mäqét are sedimentary rocks dominantly pyroclastic or welded white ash (ignimbrite) and sandstone rocks. Sandstone sedimentary rock is a clastic sedimentary rock composed mainly of different sand-sized minerals or rock grains. They form when sand layers are buried under sediments, composed of quartz, feldspar, calcite and iron oxides. They can be white, grey, pink, red, brown or black. Sandstone is a very widespread and well-known sedimentary rock (Blatt *et al.* 1980).

Among the rock churches of Mäqét *Wäradä*, Nazugn Maryam is built from a sandstone sedimentary rock, consolidated from quartz, mica and tiny particles. It is a redish, shiny and highly weathered sedimentary rock. It is similar in some parts with the rock color and form of Lalibela rock hewn churches. The other rock hewn churches are built from a welded or white ash

⁶ Dr. Alemseged Beldados (Personal Comm.), he knows the rocks easily.

ignimbrite rock.⁷ It is synonymous with flood tuff, welded tuff, white ash-flow tuff and pyroclastic flow deposit, which are the most deadly expressions of volcanism. Ignimbrites may be white, grey, pink, beige, brown or black depending on their composition and density (Blatt *et al.* 1980).

The rocks of Abäkäna Abbo and Gərar Maryam churches are weathered grey ignimbrites. The rocks of other churches such as in the churches of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm and Yädoga Abbo are less weathered white ash rocks. In general, both types of these sedimentary rocks might furnish the opportunity to the excavation of many numbers of churches in the *Wäräda*.

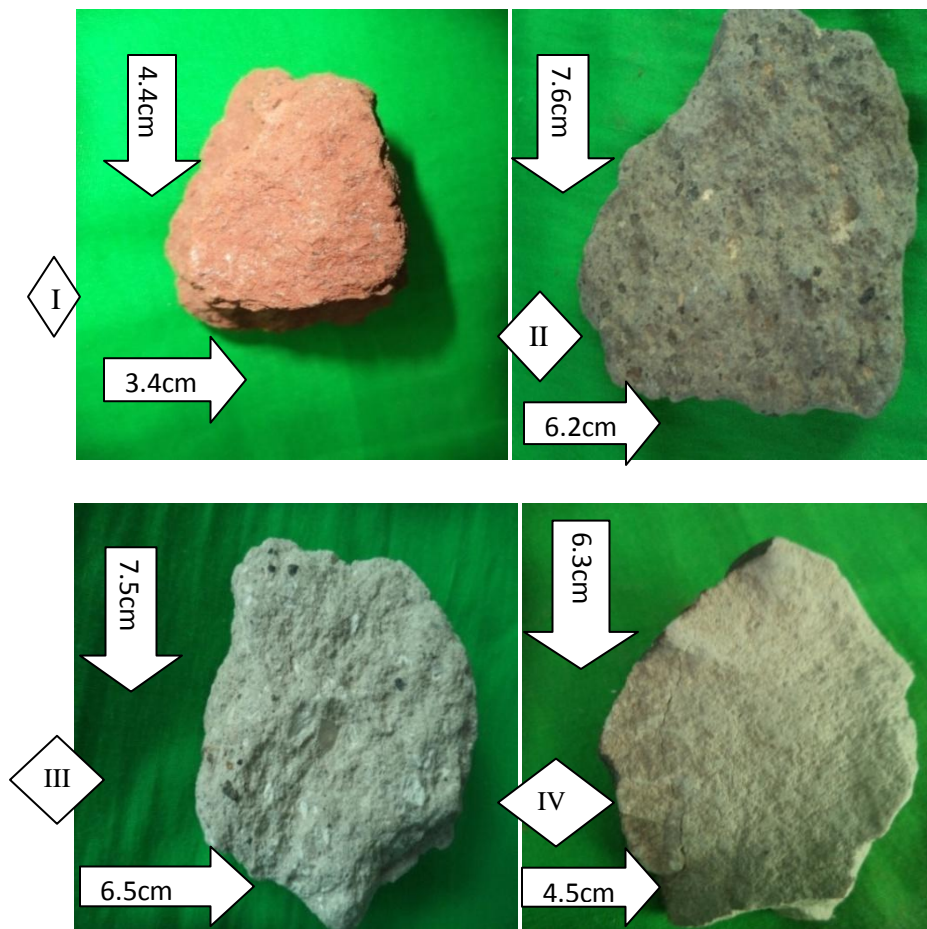


Fig.2.2 (I) a red sandstone rock from Nazugn Maryam church; ignimbrite rocks from the churches of Abäkäna Abbo(fig.2.2 II), Gərar Maryam (fig. 2.2 III) &Yädoga Abbo(fig.2.2 IV)

⁷ Dr. Alemseged Beldados (Per. Comm.)

2.2 Economic Activities of the Wäräda

The major economic activity of the people is agriculture based on subsistence and mixed farming on 49,450 hectares of cultivable land and 15,152 hectares of grazing lands of the Wäräda. It has 6,312 hectares of irrigation potentials but still only 378 hectare is irrigated. Farming is mainly depended on rainfall, between June and September that the Wäräda received the main rainfall. The farmers performed both crop production and livestock herding. Wheat, barley, tḥff, sorghum, maize, lentils, peas, beans, flax and chickpeas are widely produced. Barley, locally called *yä ehäl nägus* (king of crops), is the chief crop of the highlanders. It has multipurpose for the preparation of *enjära*, *dabbo* (bread), *bäso*, and *koräfé* (local beer) (Tesfaye 2013).

In the *wäyna däga* areas wheat, barley, tḥff, beans, peas, lentils and linseed are major crops. In the *qolla* areas sorghum, tḥff, chickpeas, *guayya* (*vicia sativa*), maize, and wheat (it has a great meanings and function in EOTC) are grown (Tesfaye 2013). The harvesting time of the Wäräda is from October to January. The farmers have a unique respect for the activities of threshing floor. It is not allowed to enter in the threshing floor wearing a shoe. The females prepared special food, *agmas/ertät*, during threshing. Females are not allowed to enter in the floor.

Eucalyptus trees for commercial purpose, construction of house and firewood consumption is common in the highlanders. The Wäräda is now the main source of construction wood to sell to the areas of Wäldiya and Meqelé (Tesfaye 2013). There is also natural franklins censing tree and precious stone (opal) and gypsum, sand deposits and gold which are not still much exploited.⁸ Cattles, sheep, goats, donkeys, and horses are the major important livestock of the Wäräda. The highland areas are suitable for sheep herding where as the lowland areas are conducive for goat herding. Moreover the area is also conducive for bee hiving (Gebeyaw 2011).

No	Livestock Category	Quantities in No
1	Cattle	154,426
2	Sheep	130,174
3	Goat	103,493
4	Donkey	16,793
5	Horse	5,456
6	Mule	1,153
7	Beehives	9,389

Table 2.2 Estimated number of Livestocks of the Wäräda in 2011(Source: MWGAC, February 2011)

⁸Yä Mäqät Wäräda Yä Mängest Communication Gudayoç Şelhüt-bét “Yä Wärädaçin Gäşeta,” (Felaqit, 2003 E.C.), pp. 1-2

Trading is conducted based on eleven customized markets. The major markets with a long history of establishment are Gärägära, Dufti, Agrit, Dəbbəkko, and Waro. Currently, there are many markets different in terms of their size and the commodities displayed. Most of the markets are established along the *Chinese Road* and Gashäna-Lalibela road. Gärägära is the chief market of the *Wäräda* conducted weekly on Saturday. Grains, oilseeds, honey products, butter, clothes, fruits, cattle, sheep, goats, pack animals, and etc displayed. Dəbbəkko is well known in its cloth and it is the most important market where highlanders and lowlanders (mostly Muslims) meet (Tesfaye 2013). Most of the market crops are supplied from Gojjam, particularly in summer times. *Dagussa*, a new crop for the people of Mäqét, is brought from Gojjam in the late 1980s. It is introduced due to the insufficient crop production of the *Wäräda* (Davice 2001).

Craft work in the *Wäräda* includes weaving, pottery, iron smelting, leather making, cloth designing and making of local single stringed violin that is used by minstrels. Weaving is dominated by Muslims of the lowlanders. Pottery is conducted by women of the lowlanders in the localities of Dəbbəkko, Tājja, Qäy Afär, Gulgé, Gafat Amba, and Tälgo. Minstrelsy is also one of the means of income for the livelihood of the families of minstrels of the *Wäräda*. Basically, Ashenafi (1975) stated that minstrelsy is a semi-professional Ethiopian musician or music craftsman/woman by *azmari* (a minstrel). Government service is the other economic activity of town dwellers. Trading, craft work and government service involve 10% of the population of Mäqét.

Despite, the agricultural economic activity of Mäqét is facing from recurrent problems of rainfall, cattle and crop diseases and drought (Kidanemariam 2012). The craft technology is not well developed, because the activity was considering being the jobs of some specific groups. Now some attempts are made to create awareness and to improve the craft technology to support the livelihood development of the *Wäräda* supported by the *Wäräda's* administration and foreign projects (JaRco Consulting 2004-2008).

2.3 Distribution of Rock Hewn Churches in Ethiopia

The rock hewn churches of Ethiopia are unevenly distributed to different areas of the country. Most of them are concentrated in the northern part and decreasingly reach to the central part of Ethiopia. The rock hewn churches of Mäqét are parts of the northern concentration. This is

mainly related with the early introduction of Christianity to the area that facilitated the development of an existed tradition of the country. The related issues about the origin and tradition of rock hewn church in Ethiopia are necessarily discussed as follow.

2.3.1 The Introduction and Expansion of Christianity in the Country

Various sources narrated the introduction of Christianity in to Ethiopia in the 4th century through trading relations with Middle East, with the arrival of Frumentius (a Christian from Tyre), the later *Abunä Sälama* and the first bishop of Ethiopia (Marcus 1994; Apolleyard 2007).

It has long been recognized that Christianity became a state religion in the 4th century A.D following the conversion of King Ezana, whose expansion beyond Täkkäzzé River credited evangelization (Sergew 1972). The way how Christianity entered in to Ethiopia was the major weapon for its expansion. Unlike Greco-Roman, where Christians suffered persecution from the ruling class, it was introduced and expanded through the officials, essentially a *top down process* (Sergew 1972; Apolleyard 2007; Phillipson 2009). It is confirmed that credited expansion of Christianity and monastic life was conducted in Ethiopia by the coming of the group of Monks, the Nine Saints who probably came to escape persecution in Rome (Sergew 1972; Sundkler & Steed 2004).

It is stated that the major evangelization activity in to the areas of Lasta was conducted during the reign of King Kaléb. In the area of Lasta, the churches of Bəlbala Qirqos, Bəlbala Giyorgis, and Sarzina Michael are believed to be built during this time (Natnael 2012). The expansion of the highland Christian Kingdom and monastic life accelerated the activity in to Amhara and Shawa. Eiyäsus Mo'a(centered at *Däbrä Hayq*) who adapted monastic life from the abbots of *Däbrä Damo*, *Abunä Täklähaymanot* of the *Däbrä Asbo* and *Bäşälotä Michael* took the most important evangelization in different parts of Ethiopia(Taddesse 1972).

2.3.1.1 Christianity in Mäqét: Evangelization Activity of *Abunä Musé* and *Abunä Aron*

Taddesse(1972) stated the evangelization of the people of Mäqét was held in the 14th century A.D by Aron, discipline of *Bäşälotä Michael*. Despite this, *traditional sources traced* the arrival of Christianity in this area in the 4th century A.D. *Gadla Abuna Musie*, unstudied local manuscript found in the church of *Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm* (one of the sites of this study)

stated *Abunä Musé* was the second bishop of Ethiopia. But there are no other reliable sources about *Abunä Musé* in the list of Ethiopian bishop order. It is stated that *Abunä Sälama*, the first bishop of Ethiopia, was succeeded by Bishop Minas who came from Egypt (Ethiopian Orthodox Church 1997; Lule 2008).

But the *gädäl* narrates that *Abunä Musé* was a pope and he preached Christianity, destroyed idolatries and built more than 40 revealed and 40 unrevealed rock churches in Mäqét and other areas. Most of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét are stated to be built by *Abunä Musé*.⁹ So, at this level, it is difficult to ignore the *gädäl* since it is not studied and at the same time, it is difficult to accept the previous works of Bishop list of Ethiopia. Future researches will solve this problem, because it may be due to research gaps.

Great attention is given for *Abunä Aron* who took the important evangelization in different parts of North Ethiopia in the 14th century A.D (Taddesse 1972). According to local traditions, *Abunä Aron* was born on March 7, 1255 in a place called *Bétälhém*, which is one of the rectification centers of liturgy in EOTC in the district of *Gayənt*, among the families of Aksumite and Zagwe kings.¹⁰ *Birhane-Meskel Desta* (1958) indicated that *Abunä Aron* was the son of King *Lalibela*'s uncle, *Gäbrä Mäsqäl*.

After attending church education, *Aron* received monkhood and went to Tigray and Lasta. While he was in *Lalibela*, a blind person showed *Däbrä Darét* that *Aron* would reside. *Abunä Aron* came with many pupils to the mountain where he excavated his first chapel at *Däbrä Qättin*.¹¹ Centered at *Däbrä Qättin*, *Abunä Aron* was conflicted with King *Säyfä Ar'ed* (r.1314-1371). The king exiled *Aron* as far as *Awash River*, in his activity of making the king's daughter a monk. While *Abunä Aron* returns from exile, he preached Christianity across the river of *Žiṭa* through *Dawunt* and *Wadla* and he settled at *Däbrä Darét* where he received a great fame among the people of *Asasa*, *Mäqét* and *Gämbia* (Taddesse 1972).

Miraculously, *Aron* is remembered that he had stopped the sun while it was setting on his way to *Däbrä Qättin* and he anathematized the sun "*አንቺም እንደ ሰው*", meaning "You blamed me like a

⁹ *Gädälä Abunä Musé*; Informants: *Qés Abba Hailä Gabriel*

¹⁰ Informants : *Qés Bitäw Wäldé*

¹¹ Informant: *Qés Bitäw Wäldé*

man" to memory his exiled life, still that place is called Anchim,¹² a place where *Ras Gugsä* and *Ras Täfäri* had fought in 1930 (Bahru 2002). There is no written sources about the Three Virgins who are believed to have built *Quraqura Maryam* and *Gəbşawit Abbo*, and *Abba Bənyam* who said to built *Abäkäna Abbo*. Myths mentions they came from Jerusalem and Egypt to preach Christianity in Ethiopia in the 4th century A.D.

2.3.2 Origin and Expansion of Rock Hewn Church Tradition in the Country

The tradition of excavation of monuments from a living rock has a long history in Ethiopia. It may trace back to the time when people resided in caves (Pankhurst 1973). But for continuous religious activities, the tradition is developed with the expansion of Christianity. The development of rock church excavation has passed several centuries, roughly ranges between the 4th and 15th centuries A.D (Gerster 1970; Buxton 1971). The tradition has been developed within special character and it is still now in practice (Finneran 2011).

As different studies indicated, the rock hewn churches of Ethiopia are more concentrated in the Northern part. This concentration and its tradition in the country can be associated with the introduction and expansion of Christianity and the landscape setting of the country which is mainly inaccessible, suited to the teaching of Christianity, as elaborated as follow.

Firstly, Christianity was introduced and expanded through northern part of the country. Due to this, various rock hewn churches are built in the northern part of the country. It is believed that the church of *Aksum Şəyon Maryam*, which is destroyed by *Ahmed Gragn* in the 16th century A.D, was built following the conversion of King *Ezana* (Buxton & Mathews 1971). It was also through northern parts that the *Nine Saints* arrived who played an important role for the expansion of monasteries in inaccessible areas.

Secondly, it is related with Biblical concepts that has influenced the building of many churches in the inaccessible areas of Northern Ethiopia. The physical ups and down hardship ways to reach in the church is symbolized with biblical versions that to inherit the Heavenly Kingdom, it needs to cope with the up and down difficulty of spiritual life (Mengistu 2004; Finneran 2004).

¹² Informant: *Diacon Taddässa Wäday*

The Biblical event at the mount of *Däbrä* Tabor is an exemplary reference for the building of many churches at the top or around mountains and hills: "...that He took Peter, John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. ...as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah ..."13 Hence, the highlands of northern Ethiopia, which are characterized by hills, mountains and escarpments were preferable by the religious fathers inhabitation.

The tradition of excavating churches from a living rock also can be associated with Biblical versions that considerably influenced the tradition, as it is quoted in the New Testament:

*"And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid in his own new tomb which he had **hewn out of the rock**; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher, and departed." (Math, 27: 57-61).*

Using rock hewn caves for burial site of Christian rulers was a common tradition in Ethiopia mainly after the 4th century A.D. Rock tombs of Christian Kings, for instance, are found in Aksum, though they are not dated. This tradition was not limited with burial sites. Furnished by the huge availability of excavated rocks of Northern Ethiopia, the tradition had developed to the hewing of wide chapels for praying unto their death. Later it has been evolving in to the building of extended churches.

Thirdly, the nature of Monastic life, which is followed by the praying of Jesus Christ in the wilderness, at the monastery of Corinth¹⁴, is another factor which latter has been activated by hermits and monks. Monks or hermits in Ethiopia had chose solitary caves to achieve their religious duties without disturbance which later changed in to monasteries (Ethiopia Orthodox Church 1997). In the context of EOTC, *gädam* (monastery) is essentially a sacred place far from human settlements and is the place where only monks, hermits and virgins lived. That is why most of the monasteries are established in the remote or inaccessible areas.

Fourthly, the availability of excavating rocks in the area also might contributed for the expansion of rock churches in the area (Mengistu 2004). The durability nature of the rocks relied the

¹³ Luke 9:28-33

¹⁴ Luke 4:1-3

interests of the builders than depending on masonry buildings. As a result, rock church building became a fascinated activity in the northern part of Ethiopia.

Moreover, political factors might have played significant role in the establishment of churches in difficult environments. The invasion of the Bejas in the 8th century A.D and the forces of the Muslims in the 9th century A.D influenced the built of churches in hidden and inaccessible areas, to save the properties of the churches from destruction (Trimingham 1952; Sergew 1972).

As it is stated, the up and down nature of Ethiopian highlands have played an important part in the country's political and cultural history (Adejumobi 2007), which indeed obviously influenced the rock church traditions of the country. As a whole, the northern highland area, which is characterized by hills, mountains and escarpments, has influenced the expansion of monasteries and distribution of churches in the country including the rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäräda.

In addition to the cases of the northern concentration of the rock hewn churches of the country, the skills and features applied on the churches are parts of the origin and tradition of rock hewn churches that needs consideration. Though it needs critical investigation, Buxton (1971) has indicated the integration of outside elements along with the introduction of Christianity on the rock church architectures of Ethiopia- based on the contacts Ethiopia had with the Christian World. He traces the origin of the tradition to Syria, Egypt and Nubia.

More importantly, the affinities of Pre-Aksumite architectural features are employed in the early and later churches. The Pre Aksumite monolithic stele features and *monkey heads* (mainly of wooden) and horizontal beams of doors and windows, which are a *sandwich type*- a layer of wood and stone, are the very common tradition of rock hewn churches of Ethiopia. The culture of sanctuary to the east end of a building of the rock churches was also existed before the introduction of Christianity in to Ethiopia, such as at Yeha (Buxton 1971; Pearce 1970). The tradition is unique from rock churches that existed in the outside world such as at Cappadocia, Turkey (Pearce 1970).

The rock hewn churches resemble the influence of the Aksumite period than the outside one. The later times such as, the period of Zagwe dynasty accomplishes apex of rock church hewing that developed from the earliest periods. The reconstruction of the original Church of Aksum Şəyon

by Buxton and Mathews (1974) and the comparison made with Bétä Mädhané Aläm at Lalibela accredited this scenario.

The built up church of Yimrhannä Kərstos also resembles to *Däbrä Dammo Monastery* (Beckingham & Huntingford 1961, Buxton 1971). This church also resembles to Immäkkina Mädhané Aläm in Lasta *Wäräda* (Natnael 2012). The most influence belongs to indigenous tradition than the introduced elements as it is stated as follow:

Neither in Lalibela nor in Tigre has there been found any evidences that foreign workmen were involved in hewing churches from rock mountains. They are unique in situation, in design and art of work and they are uniquely Ethiopian (Jager & Pearce, 1974, p. 108).

Despite of the absence of previous investigations of churches in Mäqét, this study has indicated that the establishment of the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda* is directly or indirectly related with the above mentioned points. Little is mentioned about the rock hewn church of *Abunä Aron* by Wright (1957) whose description hints some architectural features of the church by relating with the rock hewn churches of Lasta. The church was built during the Solomonic Dynasty; hence it was built based on the rock hewn church tradition of pre-Solomonic period. In general, the origin and tradition of the rock churches of the *Wäräda* provide a great scenario to the general discussion of rock hewn church tradition of the country.

2.3.3 Internal Divisions of Churches in the Tradition of Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahädo* Church (EOTC)

Commonly, a church can be internally divided in to three categories: *Qəné mahlét* (the chanting place), *qəddəst* (holy) and *qəddəstä qəddusan* (holy of holies). The first internal part of churches is the *qəné mahlét*, the widest part, where hymns, poems and ecclesiastical song of praise by priests, choir and choir leaders are performed..

The middle chamber of the church is the *qəddəst* where the Holy Communion is given to the believers by the priests. At this part deacons chanted Psalms of David, and priests read the Gospel during liturgical time. The last and the inner most part of the church is the *qəddəstä qəddusan*, where the Ark of the Covenant resided. Here, only mass can be performed. No song

materials such as drum and sistrum can be used in the liturgical activities. This part is the most sacred and only priests can access it.

In addition to these parts, many of the rock churches of Ethiopia have extra parts such as *gəb'atä mänṭola'et* (between the holy and the holy of holies) and praying parts. There are commonly three doors in the east, north and south, entrances of priests, laymen and females, respectively. Moreover, the churches in Ethiopia can be divided into *gädam*, *däbr* and *gätär*, based on their status given from the higher church administration centre. This division can be based on the number of believers, the spiritual activities given and the administrative level of the churches.

CHAPTER THREE

3. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

3.1 Introducing the Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqét

There are 19 rock hewn churches registered namely under the Culture and Tourism Office of the Mäqét Wäradä. The names of the rock hewn churches, their localities and their administrative status are introduced in the table below, and their geographical distribution map is inserted in the next page, which help to approach the next presentation and discussion parts.

No	Church's Name	Localities	Administrative Status	No	Church's Name	Localities	Administrative Status
1	Däbrä Qäṭṭin Maryam	Dabra Kärbé	däbr	11	Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm	Wäqéṭa	däbr & gädam
2	Abunä Aron Mänkrawi	"	däbr & gädam	12	Tämbäqot Mädhané Aläm	Aqqat	däbr
3	Gəbşawit Abbo	Dänkänna	gätär	13	Aqqat Marqos	"	"
4	Quraqura Maryam	"	"	14	Gərar Maryam	Boya	gätär
5	Abäkäna Abbo	Estaysh	"	15	Zəjjä Maryam	Təmtəmat	däbr
6	Nazugn Maryam	Aymaṭ	däbr	16	Däbrä Sina Maryam	Tajja	gätär
7	A'emad Šəllasé	"	gätär	17	Yädoga Abbo	"	"
8	Bétä Hara Eiyäsus	Kurissa	"	18	Dufti Gabriel	Hamusit	"
9	Washa Michael	Wärkayyä	"	19	Dufti Mädhané Aläm	"	däbr
10	Dasnja Mädhané Aläm	Zəbé	"				

Table 3.1 The rock hewn churches found in Mäqét Wäradä (Source: Yä Mäqét Wäradä Bahlna Tourism Biro, and improved)

The rock hewn churches are unevenly distributed to different areas of Mäqét. They are located in the inaccessible remote areas. Most of them are built within and around escarpments, hills and

mountains. The churches of *Däbrä Qättin* Maryam, Gəbşawit Abbo, Gərar Maryam, *Däbrä Sina* Maryam and Zəjjä Maryam are examples of the churches built along escarpments. The rock cut church of *Abunä Aron* is a good example which is built on a marvelous mountain. Tāmbäqot Mādhané Alām and Amsalä Kərstos are also another examples built on hills. There are also churches built relatively at stable environment such as Nazugn Maryam and Abäkäna Abbo.

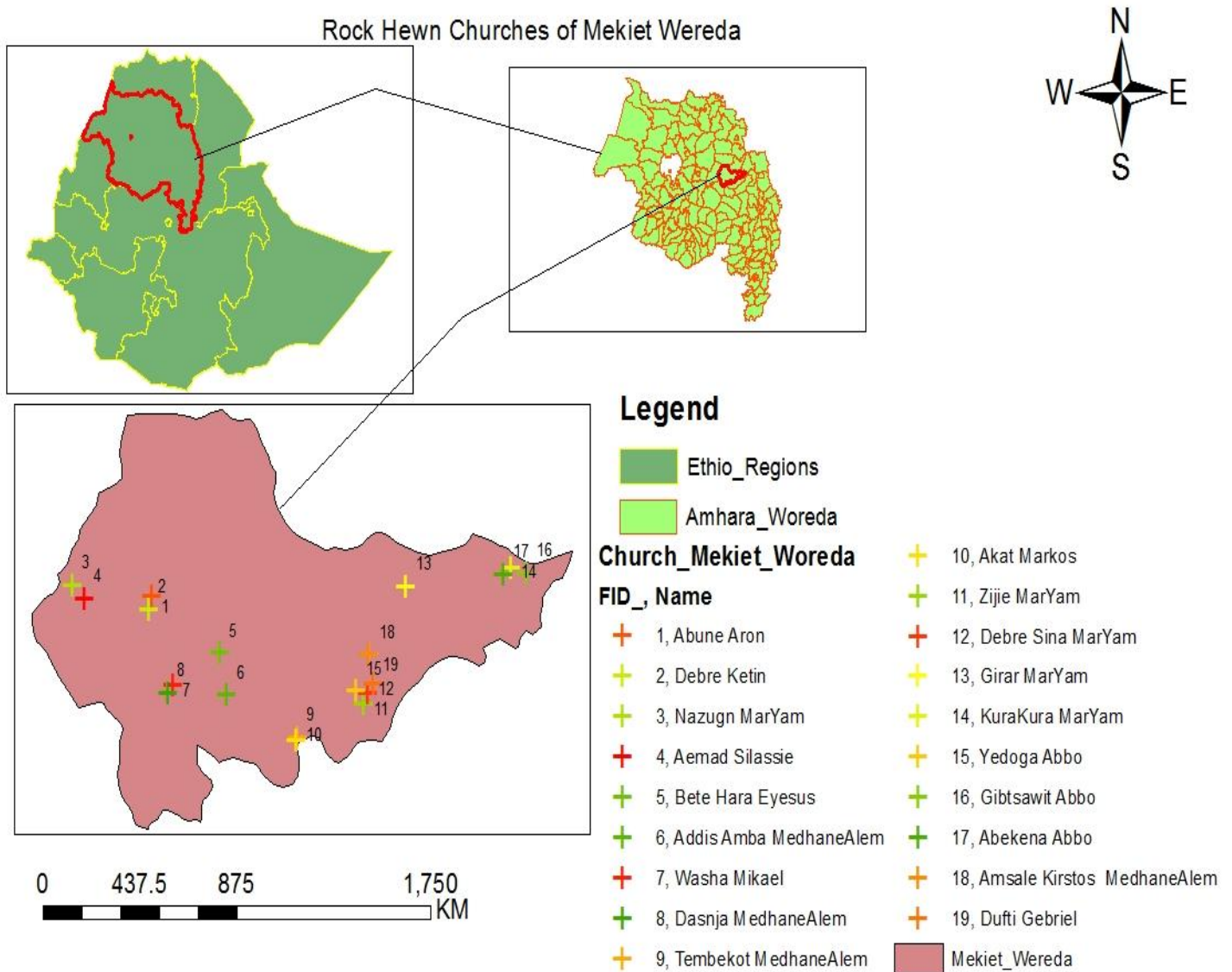


Fig.3.1 Distribution map of Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqät Wäradä (Source: Own survey and work)

3.2 Presentation of the Rock Hewn Churches

3.2.1 Däbrä Qättin Maryam

The cave church of *Däbrä Qättin* Maryam is located in 04 *qäbälé* (*Däbrä Kärbé*) of Mäqét Wäräda at a distance of 17kms to the west of Fəlaqit. It takes 1:30 hour on foot north of Agrit, a small town along the *Chinese Road*. The church is located at elevation of 2747m a.s.l. with 0464777 E & 1307563 N UTM coordinates.

As its name indicates, *Däbrä Qättin* (*Qättin*, a term derived from *Ge'ez* word to mean very thin) is established at a very thin and narrow tip of cliff which has relatively a rectangular shape, having a semi-monolithic face, surrounded by cliffs except in the southern side. The cliff is dominated by white ash ignimbrite rock, easily excavated rock. The area of the church is characterized by a delightful landscape setting. It is covered by trees such as *yähabäsha şad* (*Juniperus procera*), *embäs* (*Allophylus abyssinicus*), *wayra* (*Olea Africana*), bushes and flowers which make it very attractive especially in September and October. There are some households to the north of the church.



Fig.3.2 The environs of Däbrä Qättin Maryam, south-western view of the church (photo, sep. 2013)¹⁵

¹⁵ All of the pictures inserted in this research are taken during my field work between Sep. & Oct./2013. Some photos of *Amsalä Kərstos Mädhané Aläm* church and other pictures of churches outside of the wäräda used in the discussion are taken during my 3rd trip in Jan./2014.

This church is built by *Abunä Aron* before he was exiled in to Awash River (Taddesse 1972). After *Abunä Aron* settled at *Däbrä Darét*, the cave of *Däbrä Qättin* did not further serve as a church. It is reestablished in 2004. It is administered under the Monastery of *Abunä Aron*.¹⁶

The exterior roof of the church is covered by plaster due to the infiltration of water in to the church. The church has entrance in its western and eastern wings of the cliffs. In the north eastern side of the church, there is a storey, which is served as *Bétälhém*. It has one window and two doors. Internally, it has also a scaffold. The church is already renewed and expanded. Because, it was a chapel of *Abunä Aron* before he started construction of a church at *Däbrä Darét*. But some parts of the roof and southern part of the nave's wall is not renewed.

The chanting place is accessed in the west or in the eastern part of the church. The holy is separated from the chanting place by two arch shaped columns, which are connected by doors made of *laméra* (iron). The sanctuary is separated from the holy by newly built wall by connecting the endangered columns. It has two *laméra* doors. There is one column in the nave and the other one is removed. Unlike the church at *Däbrä Darét*, no significant features are found in this church.

3.2.2 *Däbrä Aron Mänkrawi*

The site of *Abunä Aron* Monastery is found in 04 *qäbälé* (*Däbrä Kärbé*) of the *Wäräda*, 19kms to the west of *Fəlaqit*. It takes some 25 minutes walk across the marvelous mountainous landscape, to the north of *Däbrä Qättin* Maryam. This church is located at elevation of 2713m.a.s.l. with 0465180 E & 1309086 N UTM Coordination. It is built from a white ash ignimbrite rock, easily excavated sedimentary rock.

The mount of the church is beautified by its delightful landscape setting surrounded by escarpments, hanged overlooking the lowlands of *Täkkäzzé* River as far as *Bugəna* and *Lasta*. The mountain is abysmal with up and down series of hills at the top. It is covered by a dense forest dominated by trees such as *yähbaäsha šad* (*Juniperus procera*), *wäyra* (*Olea Africana*), *embs* (*Allophylus abyssinicus*), *talo* (*Rhus retinorrhoea*), *qulqual* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*), *qäga* (*Rosa abyssinica*), *kätkäta* (*Dodonaea angustifolia*), *qärät* (*Osyris quadripartita*),

¹⁶ Informant: Priest Bitäw Wäldé; interviewed on: 9/9/2013

embaço(*Rumex nervosus*), etc. and different bushes and flowers. In the forest and the escarpments, different wild animals such as a group of monkeys, apes, tigers, and birds live.

The church is found at the end of a mountain series which is called *Däbrä Darét*, overlooking the western bank of *Täkkäzzé* on its upper course immediately west of Lalibela. It is very far from villages, which are unevenly settled underneath of the mountain. The burial sites¹⁷ within the compound of the church are covered by stone and soil and planted trees such as *qulqual* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*). There are some grass sheltered burial houses, served for monks' chapel.

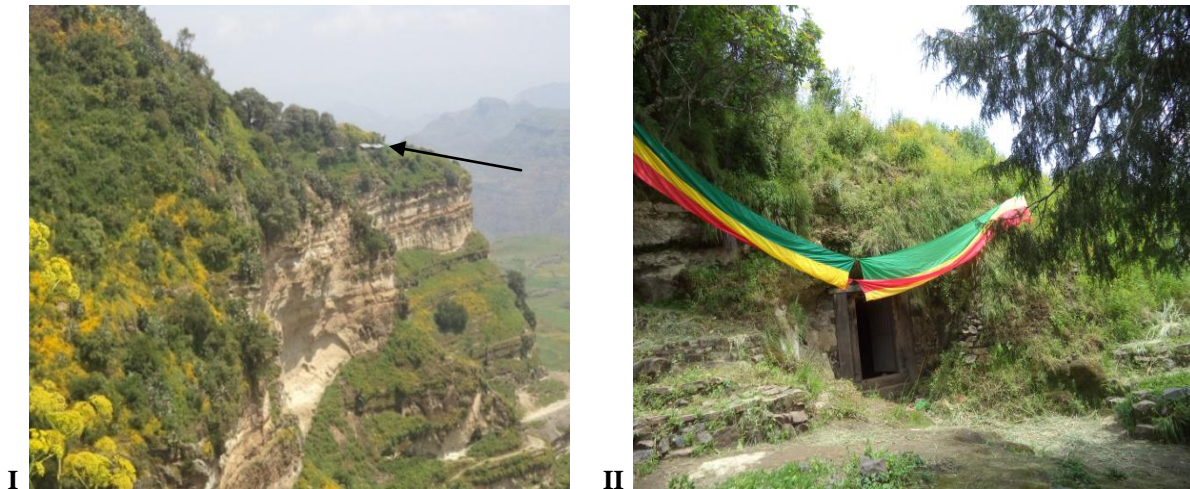


Fig.3.3 (I) South eastern view of the church; fig.3.3(II) the entrance in to the anteroom

According to *Gädlä Abunä Aron*, the church is built by *Abunä Aron* after he returned back from exile to Awash River by King *Säyfa Ar'ed* in the 14th century A.D. The administration of the church includes the cave church of *Däbrä Qättin Maryam* and the newly masonry church of St. Holy Trinity situated south of *Abunä Aron Church*. Only males can access the church of *Abunä Aron* of the *Däbrä Darét*,¹⁸ which is a common tradition in the EOTC. Females stay at the church of St. Holy Trinity and they can visit *Däbrä Qättin*.

The access to the church is using one entrance in the southern side. It leads to an anteroom that has partially opened roof, the biggest type of *səqurät*.¹⁹ In this aperture, water droplets has entered and infiltrated in to south-eastern ground of the church. The opening is widened due to

¹⁷ Burial sites of the rock hewn churches are prepared either sheltered by grass or iron sheets or not sheltered. The sheltered and more nearest burials to the churches indicated the upper echelons of society or the servants of the churches during their lifetime.

¹⁸ Informant: Priest *Bitäw Wäldé*; interviewed on: 11/9/2013

¹⁹ *Səqurät* is a Ge'ez term to mean aperture that can enter light in to a sanctuary

the problems it faced in different times and it is partially sheltered by grass to protect the rainfall droplets on the church. After the anteroom, the house of treasures (a storey) and the *Bétälhém* or *Bétä Egäzi'abəḥér* (the House of God) are found. The external wall of the church, facing after the elapsed vestibule, is maintained by stone and mud. There are doubled timber doorways separated by timber arch shaped standing supporters, to approach the congregation of the church.

Internally, the church resembles some but unique and important architectural features. The *qəné mahlét* (the chanting place) is the part where the amazing feature of the roof, *səqurät*, the second aperture, is found. It is served as a passage of sunlight in to the church. There is no rain droplets enter in to the church through the *səqurät*. This feature (the *səqurät*) is stated in the *Gädlä Abunä Aron* as follow:

"ወንበ እንተ ውስጥስ ስቁረተ መቅደስ አልቦ ዘይወርድ ነጥበ ዝናም ምንተኒ
ዘእንበለ እግረ ምዕላረ ፀሐይ ባሕተቱ ወእስከ ማኅለቅታ ለዓለም ወንክነኒ
ይደልወኑ ንበል ዝ ነገር መንክር ወመድምም።"²⁰

ትርጉም:- ወደ መቅደሱ ስቁረት ውስጥም እስከ ዓለም ፍጻሜ ድረስ ያለ ፀሐይ ጮራ በስተቀር የዝናም ነጠብጣብ ምንም አይወርድም። እኛም ይህ ነገር የሚያስገርም የሚያስደንቅም ነው እንበል።

Translation :- In the *səqurät* of the chapel, rain droplet never enters except the light of sun unto the end of this world. And we have to say this thing is amazing and marvelous.



Fig.3.4 the səqurät of Abunä Aron church

²⁰ *Gädlä Abunä Aron*

Beyond the religious aspect, the culture of *səqurät* of *Abunä Aron* marks the development of rock hewn church tradition in Ethiopia. The skill of *Abunä Aron* has been acknowledged by different Ethiopian Church scholars. The most interesting poem, listed below, is delivered by *Aläqa Lämna*, which shows the disallowing of females entering in to the church in comparison with the rain, in that, females are forbidden not on behalf of their sin but as a rule of the monastery.

(Ge'ez) አነ ወዝናም እንዘ ንጹሐን እምነውር ወእንዘ በቀል አልብን፤
አሮን እምበዊኦ ቤቱ በከንቱ ከልአን።
እስመ እመ ዐረግነ ላዕለ ወእመ ታሕተ ወረድነ፤
ዘምስለ አቡነ አሮን ያስተሳልመነ፤
አረጋዊ ኢተረክበ ለነ።²¹

(Amharic):- እኔና ዝናብ ከነውር ንጹሐን ስንሆን ቁም በቀል ሳይኖርብን፤
አሮን ወደ ቤቱ ከመግባት በከንቱ ከለከለን።
ወደላይ ብንወጣ ወደታችም ብንወርድ፤
ከአባታችን አሮን ጋራ የሚያስታርቀን
ሽማግሌ አልተገኘም።²² (Source: Mengistu Lemma (2003 E.C), p247)

Translation:- Rain and me, cleaned from indecent and no revenge,
Aron has prohibited us from getting in to His home.
Though we wandering up and down,
We do not gained an elder,
Who reconcile us with our father, Aron.

Within the church, 14 pillars are standing decorated by horizontally layered single lines. They are connected with the roof and each other by arcades that ceiling the roof of the nave. They are widest in their base and at the top and have rectangular shapes. These pillars formed the different parts of the church. They separated the chanting place, the holy and the sanctuaries by forming north-south rows. The columns in the southern part of the church are very wide. The chanting place is wider than the rest. It is place where hymns, psalms and poems are delivered by the choirs. The holy has two parts separated by columns.

²¹ Mengistu Lemma 2003 E.C (in Amharic), p. 247.

²² Ibid.

The sanctuary of the church has three parts, separated by pillars. The first part, on the right southern part, is the *mäqdäs* for the Ark of *Abunä Aron*. The middle one is the *mäqdäs* of St. Marry and the last on the northern side is the *mäqdäs* of the Apostles. Each *mäqdäs* has different features in their respective roofs. The *mäqdäs* of *Abunä Aron* has a dome shaped feature whereas the *mäqdäs* of St. Marry has no any unique feature, roughly hewn roof. The sanctuary of the Apostles has a big engraved cross above the throne.



Fig. 3.5 a cross engraved roof in the sanctuary of the Apostles

There are rectangular windows east of the sanctuaries. Different divisions are found behind the sanctuary. The part to the north of the *mäqdäs* of the Apostles is not opened and is believed to be occupied by bones of saints who died as a result of transmitted diseases. To south of the holy, there are two passages running southward and finally connected by one closed door. They are separated by big standing columns. The excavation of the church is believed to be started from this part. A decorated engraved cross at the wall near to the wooden closed entrance is believed to be used for praying of *Abunä Aron* during his excavation of the church.

There is also a small hole in front of the engraved cross, excavated to memory the white partridge which is believed to led *Abunä Aron* to *Däbrä Darét* while he was coming from his

exile, Awash River, as it is stated in the *Gädlä Abunä Aron*.²³ These corridors are exposed for water infiltrated from the first opened roof corridor of the church, in the western part.

The part to the east of the sanctuaries has a passage with arch shaped feature that leads to a domed circular space, used as a chapel. It probably could be a sanctuary of the church before the excavation of the current sanctuaries or could be the fourth sanctuary. Because the dome shaped roof of churches is often a feature of sanctuaries, where the throne of the Ark placed. There is a collection of bones of saints along this passage.

The church is roughly hewn; the sign of the material used during construction is observed on the roof of the chanting place. The excavator has used a digging material, *gudäb*, believed to be given from an Angel for *Abunä Aron*, which is presented in the church together with the *Abun's* white *çära* that was used for fly protection.²⁴ These are among the sacred treasures of the church which are only observed during festivity of the church. There is an ample of material cultures in this church including various parchment books, different historical crosses, chanting treasures, liturgical materials and cloths and other golden clothes housed in the treasury, situated west of the church.



Fig. 3.6 a Priest holding the *gudäb* and the white *çära* of Aron at the annual festivity, Sep.15/2013

²³ Informants: *Abba Gäbrä Egzi'abhér Wäldätäklé; Qés Bitäw Wäldé*; interviewed on: 11/9/2013.

²⁴ Informants: *Ibid.*

3.2.3 Gəbşawit Abbo

This site is situated at 65kms to the east of Fəlaqit in 034 *qäbälé*(Dänkänna). It takes at least 1:30 hours walk after Boya, a small town along the *Chinese Road*. The church has 0519794 E and 1311919 N UTM coordinates with elevation of 2912m a.s.l.

The environs around the church is astounding overlooking northward to the mountain of Gəm'asfäré, a series of escarpments where the inaccessible rock hewn church of Mawuré Estifanos is located, and Säqoy River, which forms the boundary of Lasta and Mäqét. Gəbşawit Abbo is very far from the inhabitants of the area. The cliffs which forms the escarpment of *Gəra* Mäqét, pass above and below the church. The area may be rich in gold ore as I have observed the involvement of the local people in traditional mining underneath the cliffs, below the church. The area is scarcely populated by *yähabäsha şəd* (*Juniperus procera*) and *wayra* (*olea Africana*) trees. The church is built from a white ash ignimbrite rock. The people of the area used small caves for burial sites around the church and old aged fossils are collected in small caves.



Fig. 3.7 (I) Western environs of Gəbşawit Abbo; fig.3.7 (II) Northern view of the church

This church is believed to have been built by female saints, *Şällas Dänaglan*/ the Three Virgins (namely *Ïistis*, *Gəpis* and *Aläpis*) who came from Egypt and Jerusalem in the fourth century A.D.²⁵ The church was overruled by the war of Ahmed *Grag*n and it has been discovered during

²⁵ Informant: *Qés Alämnäw Mäkonnän*; interviewed on: 2/10/2013

the reign of Fasilädäs in the 17th century A.D. But liturgical activity was not given regularly until recently.²⁶

The church is actually a cave. The frontal facade of the church resembles the features observed at Nazugn Maryam and in some of rock hewn churches at Lalibela. There are five windows of which the two are false windows. Below the windows, there is also a horizontal layer passing along the wall. The windows are protected by the edge of the rock. But some of the windows have collapsed.

The church is accessed through two recently attached wooden doors which sides are piled up by stone and mud. The first in the right is for females' entrance and the next is for males. A closed door that could access the nave is found east of the church. Using females' entrance, we can access the first part of the church, *məqwamä anəst* (females' anteroom), separated from the chanting places by wall partly cracked and filled by mud and stone. It has one door and two small openings on the wall.

The chanting place and the holy are divided by two pillars, which were matched each other, with the roof and the wall by arcades. One of the pillars is broken and the undetached part of its base and some of the rubbles are found placed in the church. The other pillar which is supported by doubled horizontal layers (friezes) is still standing though some of its parts below the layer is rubbed or scarped probably due to leaning of animals before its discovery.



Fig.3.8 (I) A doubled layered pillar; fig.3.8 (II) a pilaster on the wall of the church

²⁶ Informants: Priest Taddässä Abraham; interviewed on: 2/10/2013

The wall is supported by pilasters, the counter parts of columns, that have horizontal layers. Some parts of the roof and wall (now is piled up by stone and mud) are cracked and fragmented. The entrance in to the sanctuary is through one wooden door which originally has a "monkey head" structure. There is also one opened window relatively similar with external windows though losing its some features. Internally, the door has similar features with other churches in Mäqét. In the northern part of the sanctuary, there is a *səqurät* with a space of an arch shaped entrance. There is also a hole with a rectangular shape. The throne of the nave is a semi-monolithic which is carved to its eastern side. The sanctuary has a rectangular dome with white and black features.

3.2.4 Quraqura Maryam

The rock hewn church of Quraqura Maryam lies at 55kms to the east of Fəlaqit in 034 *qäbälé*, about 30 minutes walk to the west plane of Gəbşawit Abbo. It is located an elevation of 2972 m a.s.l with 0517607 E and 1312547 N UTM coordinates.

It is found on an elongated hill, which is connected with the escarpment of *Gəra Mäqét*. Villages are found under the hill. The area especially its south western part is inhabited by a dense forest dominated by *yähabäsha-şad* (*Juniperus Procera*). Burial sites are located in the yard of the church. One way in the north leads to the yard, surrounded by piled fences and other directions are protected by a cliff.



Fig.3.9 (II) Quraqura Maryam, northern view; fig. 3.9 (II)a dense forest, south-west of the church

The church is believed to be built by *Šällas Dänaglan* (The Three Virgins) who built Gəbşawit Abbo. Its conservation activity has been started in 1972.²⁷ Some parts of the cave are destroyed except its holy and sanctuary, now enclosed by a new masonry building. The northern and western base of the rock is totally replaced by the new wall made of stone layers of a similar rock. The newly added building is constructed in a way common to the recent tradition of circular shaped and conically roofed tradition. The original rock bases are viewed in the southern and eastern exterior of the church.

Internally, the church has the three common parts. The *qəné mahlét* consist the renewal and the replaced part. The roof sheltered by iron sheets is supported by wooden frameworks. It is separated from the *qəddəst* by two wide and rectangular columns. These columns are not arch shaped simply attached with the roof by rectangular structures. Their base is supported by piled structures due to cracking problems. The roof of this part is highly fragmented.

One wooden door leads to the *gəbə'atä mäntola'et* (a part along masking of the throne) and the sanctuary. The external wall of the former one is piled by stone layers and it is rectangular in plan, which measures 3m length, 1m width and 2.6m height. The *mäqdäs* measures 2.9m length, 2m width and 2.4m height. North of the throne, there is inaccessible ambulatory with arch shaped view measured 5.5m length. It has one small door temporarily closed by wood. This structure could not be used for the entrances of priests during liturgy because it has short height, less than 1.5m. But it might be hewn for light entrance. There is also an arch shaped structure where the arch deacon stands, east of the throne and similarly in the southern part. The dome of the sanctuary is rectangular.

3.2.5 Abäkäna Abbo

Abäkäna Abbo is found 55km east of Fəlaqit in 033 *qäbälé*. It takes 1:30 hour on foot to north of Eəstaysh, a small town along the *Chinese Road* and 20 minutes walk west of Quraqura Maryam. It is located at 2872m a.s.l elevation with UTM coordination of 0516427 E & 1311711 N.

The church is carved in a living hard grey ignimbrite rock or chalcedony. Its yard, covered by *yähabäsha şəd* (*Juniperus Procera*), is surrounded by piled stone layers.

²⁷ Informant: *Qés* Ambayä kasé; interviewed on: 3/10/2013

It is believed to have been built by a monk, Abba Bənyam, in the fourth century A.D.²⁸ Just like that of Quraqura Maryam, the main rock part of the church is enclosed by a recent building. The external part of the new building is constructed by stone layers plastered by cement and covered by iron sheets in the early 1990s.²⁹

The base of the church's rock in the northern part is totally removed. The western part is detached from the parent rock forming a space, which probably indicates that the church might be a semi-monolithic. The eastern and southern part of the rock is not observed. The new enclosure has three doors and many windows. It forms the chanting place. The roof, sheltered by corrugated iron sheets, is supported by oval shape structure added on the main rock's roof of the church. It has a white color and is constructed based on the culture of house construction of the area by using of cane and reinforcing beam frameworks to cope the iron sheets.



Fig.3.10 The church of Abäkäna Abbo, north-western side

The un-collapsed part of the rock hewn cave consists the *qəddəst* and *mäqdäs*. The *qəddəst* has a horizontal layer in its external wall. The wall is detached from the parent rock in its northern and western sides that make it a semi-monolithic. The roof of the rock forms an edge protecting the windows and the wall below it. Three opened windows similar with Gəbşawit Abbo in the northern and western facades existed in the church, and two entrances, relatively oval shaped.

²⁸ Informant: *Qés Sättägn Hailu*; interviewed on: 6/10/2013

²⁹ Informant: *Märgéta Amabyä Sətotaw*; interviewed on: 6/10/2013



Fig. 3.11(I) the newly framed roof; fig.3.11(II) the edge of the main rock (the blue colored below the edge is the horizontal layer)

In the internal part of the *qaddäst*, there are 8 rectangular structures attached between the wall and the roof. The *qaddäst* has a rectangular shape becoming narrow towards its southern part. This part was separated from the *mäqdäs* by two rectangular non arch shaped columns, attached with the roof supported by rectangular structures. Now they are connected filled by stone and mud to form a wall and a wooden doorway leads in to the sanctuary. The *mäqdäs* has 7.5m length, 3m width and 3m height. Its roof is not dome shaped and is unlevelled. East of this part, there is an indirect small window for the entrance of light.

3.2.6 Nazugn Maryam

The rock hewn church of Nazugn Maryam is found in 010 *qäbälé* (Aymat) at 30kms west of Fəlaqit, 2:30 hours walk from *Däbrä Zäbit*. It is located at elevation of 2225m a.s.l. with UTM coordinates of 0453588 E & 1310423 N.

The courtyard of the hypogeum, which is fenced piled up by stones, is covered by different trees, grasses and cemetery sites. The trees found in the church include *yähabäša-šad* (*Juniperus procera*), *wäyra* (*olea Africana*), *warka* (*Ficus vasta*), *qulqual* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*), *talo* (*Rhus retinorrhoea*), *checho* (*Premna schimperi*), *merez* (*Acokanthra schimperi*), *qänttafa* (*Pterollobium stellatum*), *wanza* (*Cordia africana*), etc.

The church of Nazugn Maryam is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. *Gädlä Abunä Musé* states the religious activity of the *Abun* in Gayənt and then in

Nazugn.³⁰ The church is stated to be built after *Abunä Musé* has hewed the rock hewn churches of *Wuqəro* Giyorgis and *Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm*³¹, north west of the town of *Näfas Mäwuça*.

The church is hidden by the cliff of *Däbrä Zäbiṭ* and the hills surrounded it. The area is dominated by red soil. The rock from which the church built is red sandstone similar to the rock of *Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm* church.

This church had escaped from destruction during the war of *Ahmed Gragn* in the 16th century. But a non rock church that had been built in the western side of the church is believed to be burnt by *Gragn*. Before this time, the rock hewn church was used for monks to pray there. Recently, the huts of monks were founded but it is stolen by unknown person.³² The ruin of its base is observed there, which may provide opportunity for another archaeological work.



Fig.3.12 the environs of Nazugn Maryam, viewed from south-east

³⁰ Informant: *Qés Mətku Şägayä*; interviewed on: 5/9/2013

³¹ I have observed the church of *Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm*. It is a magnificent monolithic church carved from red sandstone that attached to a hill. It has different parts internally with a storey over the chanting place. It resembles an Aksumite style of entrances. It has two sanctuaries with two rock hewn thrones. The pillars in the chanting place and the nave with different extent of excavation resembles the shape of Aksumite Stele. The church's southern facade is conserved using cement and basaltic stones which abolished the original features of the church. It is endangered by the instability of the area due to floods that penetrated in to the ground. The roof of the church, sheltered by iron sheets, is inhabited by rock of hyrax.

³² Informant: *Qés Mäbré Wärräta*; interviewed on: 5/9/2013

The hypogeum of Nazugn Maryam has a rectangular shape, accentuated with the rock hewn churches of Lalibela. The detachment of the church from the parent rock is deeply excavated on all sides. The rock detached from the church forms the cliff surrounding the church. It is served as a platform for religious festivities. The entrance in to the yard of the church is through a stair northern side of the church. There are two tunnels or passages in the western and north-eastern side of the detached rock. The monolithic church covers an area of 541m². Internally, the church measures 15m length, 10m width and 10m height.

According to my informants, the tunnel in the west is believed to be used for the entrance of the River of Zoga that flows west of the church, to wash the excavated particles from the church and to drive the removals through the north eastern tunnel. The tunnel in the west was used also as a passage of people in to the ground of the church's yard during festivals. But now the entrance is closed by wooden door due to stealing problems.³³ But the north-eastern tunnel is used as a draining system which acknowledged the church in its engineering skills of the time.

The external roof of the church, rectangular in shape, is covered by flatly dropped black stones plastered by cement, which causes deterioration of the rock. The maintenance of the roof is done in 1960 where as the activity to fill the fragmentation and the collapsed part of the wall piled up by stone and cement is made in 1990.³⁴

The church has four facades and one opened and sixteen false windows hewn externally, marking the architectural characters of the church. The windows have rectangular feature at the bottom and pointed semi-circular structure at the top. All were protected from rain and sunlight by the edge of the roof, projected forming a hut-like protection to the windows and the walls of the church. They are also separated by the vertically carved pilasters. A *mäqännächa*³⁵ has passed horizontally in all facades, however. There are three entrances with thick wooden doors to access the internal part of the church.

In the northern facade, the five false windows are observed. Most of the windows lost their features. From the left side, the first window has lost its protection, the edge that projected to

³³ Informant: *Qés Dästaw Şägayä*; interviewed on: 5/9/2013

³⁴ Informant: *Qés Mətku Şägayä*; interviewed on: 5/9/2013

³⁵ In the area of Mäqét, *mäqännächa* or *mäqännät* is a piece of cloth used by females to support their shoulder in addition to its adornment of the females. In relation to these functions, the horizontal layer existed on the wall and pillars are locally termed as *mäqännächa*/rock girdle.

facilitate drainage. The rest windows' protection is extremely endangered. The rock girdle is totally removed from this facade except some parts below the first window in the left. Some part of the wall is piled by stone and cement. There are two timber doorways in this facade, for the entrance of priests and males.

The western facade of the church is the most collapsed and endangered one. There are three false windows severely collapsed. The last window in the right is totally disappeared. The edge of the roof is removed, except a sign of the edge above the middle window. Only the newly added stone and cement can be seen. The rock girdle is totally lost and the rectangular form of this facade is confusing. The wall below the windows of this facade is filled by stone and cement. There are also small cross shaped small windows. My informant told me that windows are believed to be used for the entrance of water from Zoga River, through the tunnel in the west of this facade to clean the excavated dusts.³⁶ They are not filled up and now are served for the entrance of light. Probably, they might be a cross shaped windows before it is piled up.



Fig. 3.13 Northern and western facade of Nazugn Maryam church

In the southern facade of the church, five false windows were existed parallel to the blind windows of the northern facade, separated by vertical buttresses; but only four of them are

³⁶ Informant: *Qés Mätku Şägayä*; interviewed on: 5/9/2013.

observable. The second window in the right side is blocked by the piled structure which elongated from the base to the roof of the church. The edge of the roof is mainly removed and the rest is stepping to fail. The rock girdle or the layer that lined along this facade is observed but fragmented. This facade is partially piled up by stone and cement. The left side of this facade is endangered. There is one wooden door entrance of females. There are also narrow cross shaped windows serving as entrances of light. The *Bätälhém* which is attached to the rock in front of this facade, roofed by grass, is located. But the original rock hewn *Bätälhém* is disappeared.

There are three false windows relatively saving their features in the eastern facade of the church. But the first in the right side is collapsed and its protection of the roof edge is removed. The rest two windows have better status and the hut-like protection existed. There is a wood dropped along the roof and the cliff used as a ladder to access the roof of the church to remove grasses grown on the roof. The rock girdle and vertical buttresses are relatively protected than the other facades. The wall is also less fragmented. This facade shows that the building quality of the wall is very smooth and attractive. There is an opened window partially filled by wood and stone. There is improper water channel to drain some parts of the rain droplets on the roof. But it accelerates deterioration than the protection. This facade is better protected than the other facades.



Fig.3.14(I) Western facade of the church; fig.3.14(II) eastern facade of the church

Internally, the church has three parts: the *qané mahlét*, the *qəddəst* and the *mäqdäs*, separated by columns. The four rectangular columns erected with no arcades. The first two columns separate

the *qəddəst* from the *qəné mahlét*. The next two columns separate the *qəddəst* from the *mäqdäs* and they are attached in to the wall by piled stones plastered by cement to make the sanctuary independent. The access in to the sanctuary is through two wooden doorways. There is one throne hewn from the main rock. There is also a unique feature above the throne, called *Amdä Wärq* (the pillar of gold). The roof of the internal part of the church is exposed for cracks which may filtrates water in to the church. The roof is not smoothly hewn.

3.2.7 A'emad Qəddəst Šəllasé

The cave church of A'emad Holy Trinity is found 25kms to the west of Fəlaqit in 010 *qəbälé* of the *Wäräda*, east of Nazugn Maryam and north-west of *Däbrä Zäbiṭ*. The church is located at elevation of 2770m a.s.l. with 0455419 E and 1308593 N UTM coordinates.

The church is hewn from an easily excavating white ignimbrite rock attached with an escarpment runs across the end of the highland of *Däbrä Zäbiṭ*, connecting *Çäçäho*, which in turn, connects *Bäggémdər* and *Wällo*. The area is covered with different trees including *wayra (Olea Africana)*, *yähäbäsha şəd (Juniperus procera)*, *eucaliptus tree*, *embis (Allophylus abyssinicus)*, etc. It is far from settlement area protected by the escarpment. Burial sites are observed within the compound of the church. There are some burial sites sheltered by grass and iron sheet roofs.



Fig. 3.15(I) Eastern side of the church; fig.3.15 (II) western side of the church

The church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. But it assumed to be lost until its opening by a monk coming from *Méça*, in *Gojjam*, during the reign of *Ləbbənä*

Dəngəl(1508-1540) in the 16th century.³⁷ This church has no any unique exterior or interior architectures. The western and eastern parts of the church are covered by iron sheet roofs with newly added piled walls. The church has four wooden and *lamera* doors in the west and eastern face. The roof of the church in its external part is covered by plasters to protect the infiltration of water in to the church. Internally, the church has the three common parts measuring 13.75m length, 13m width and 3.20m height. These are the storey where liturgical activities are delivered. They are added to widen the church, which is clearly seen on the rocks excavated. New columns are roughly prepared.

The activity is started in 1975 by *Abba* Kidanä Maryam and priest *Gäbrä* Həywät, a local person who initiated the people for the activity and the activity is ended in 1991.³⁸ But the original part of the church is under the current church which is temporarily covered by wood layers. There is no reliable local information for this issue about the cave under the ground, simply it is a chapel.

There is a small window in the west for the entrance of light in to the church. The nave has two doors made of *laméra*. In addition, parchment books, crosses and other treasures are found in this church in the house of treasures, situated far to the east of the church. It has also ritual activities and annual celebration of Holy Trinity.

3.2.8 Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus

This rock hewn cave church is located 5kms to the north-east of Fəlaqit in 01 *qäbälé* (Kurissa). Its elevation is 2613m a.s.l. and has UTM coordinates of 0474510 E and 1302308 N.

The church is built on the tip of an escarpment which runs east-west direction stepping to connect the highland of Fəlaqit, the town of the *Wäräda*. The cliff surrounds the church except in the western direction. The rock of the church is ignimbrite rested forming a hill on the tip of the cliff, which is clearly exposed for weathering activities. The area is covered by *grar* (*Acacia abyssinica*), *qulqual* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*) and *embs* (*Allophylus abyssinica*). During summer time, the area is covered by a grass- *mujja* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*). The people are settled in the eastern, northern and southern side of the cliffs. The burial sites are located around the yard of

³⁷ Informant: *Märgéta* Gétachäw Abäbä; interviewed on: 6/9/2013

³⁸ Informant: *Qés* Däsälägn Adbaru; interviewed on: 6/9/2013.

the church. The burial sites are covered by trees and are simply buried using tradition of the area, covered by stones and soils.



Fig.3.16 (I) environs of the church, western view, fig.3.16 (II) northern cliff of the church

The church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. But the Ark of the Covenant is believed to be entered in the church by a monk, *Amdä Maryam*, though the time is vague, probably in the 16th century. During the occupation of the Italians (1936-41), the church was interrupted and robbed by Italian invaders.³⁹

Most of its parts, the *qəné mahlét* and the *qəddəst*, have been collapsed in 1987. Liturgical service of the church had stopped until 2013. Instead, a newly built non rock hewn church was used for liturgical service. Before this new church, they left after attempting to excavate a new church beneath the collapsed church. After rehabilitation, the rock church, roofed by iron sheets, has started its service in 2013.⁴⁰ The collapsed part is replaced by newly constructed wall. Through this activity, two small caves are founded; a decorated small pottery and a water conservation pool in the north west of the church are discovered. The sacred water conservation pool is sacred and it is cool, very deep and its amount is sustainable.

There are two water pools believed to be used for soaking of animal skins for parchment preparation by the monk, *Amdä Maryam*. My informant told me that there might be another

³⁹ Informant: *Qés Adam Fäntayä*; interviewed on: 16/9/2013.

⁴⁰ Informant: *Qés Mängəst Adal*; interviewed on: 16/9/2013.

water conservation pool north of the sanctuary.⁴¹ There are *laméra* doors and windows in the south and west leading into the church. Only the original rock of the *gəbə'atä mäntola'et*, and the sanctuary are protected. But the narrow *gəbə'atä mäntola'et* is now the holy. It has two unclosed doors. It is separated from the chanting place by rectangular columns attached with the wall. The roof is domed and inked by green and red colors which are disposing off.



I



II

Fig.3.17(I) a discovered pottery; fig.3.17(II) a sacred water conservation pool

The *mäqdäs* can be accessed by priests through two doors. In side of this part, there are engraved crosses in the northern side of the wall. The throne where the *tabot* rests is hewn from the main rock. It has different parts but now is adjusted in the way situated to current service. There are also paintings in the wall invisible for eye. Above the throne, there is a dome shaped roof similar with the roof of the current holy described above. The church's average measurement is 10.10m length, 9.40m width & 2.37m height.

3.2.9 Washa Michael

The rock hewn church of Washa Michael, 8kms to the south of Fəlaqit, is found in 013 *qäbälé* of the *Wäradä*. It has 2301m a.s.l. elevation with UTM coordinates of 0468255 E & 1298535 N.

The church is covered by different trees such as *yähäbäsha şəd* (*Jasminum grandiflorum*), *wayra* (*Oliea Africana*), *lol* (*Ekebergia capensis*) and *anfar* (*Nuxia congesta*). The church is built at the north western mid part of a hill that overlooks the escarpment blocking the highlands of Fəlaqit

⁴¹ Informant: *Ibid.*

and Wärkayyā and pass across as far as Wadla. The southern and western side of the church is inhabited by burials.

There is no clear local information by whom and when this church was built, probably by Abunä Musé. But it is believed that, it was established as a monastery by Amdä Šəllasé, a monk who established the monastery of *Mahbärä Šəllasé* in Mätamma, Gondar. The church's religious activity was interrupted due to *zämänä aşäba* (hanger and drought time) until the reign of Menlik II. Its service was started by a monk, Wäldä Giyorgis, who came from Gojjam. He received permission from *Ras Wallé*, the then governor of Bäggedär to open the church.⁴²

During the march to the Battle of Adwa, in 1896, Däjjach Gugsä Biräsa, the then ruler of Mäqét and Wadla, promised to keep this cave churches' administration with *Emämuz Gädam* (a seventeen century masonry church) if he returned from battle with good luck. After victory, he did that but the continuous activity of the church's service together with the *Gädäm* started in 1964, after the church is cleaned from its filled of dust. Crosses, staffs and beads were found. Now it is administered by *Emämuz Gädam*, situated to the west of this church.⁴³

Basically, the hill has twin independent rock churches, the church of St. George in the right and St. Michael in the left side, which are actually attempted to abut them internally. Both are hewn from a single weathered white ash ignimbrite sedimentary rock, dominating the hill. The presentation of the two sanctuaries is delivered separately as follow.

The Sanctuary of St. George

This cave church has collapsed with the exception of its sanctuary. Originally, it had four internal parts planned rectangular, which measures 10m length, 17m width & 5.5m height. The two parts of the cave, the chanting place and the holy, have totally disappeared. The part of the hill's head proper to these parts has collapsed. According to my informant (*Abba Därbäw Räta*), the time when this problem occurred is not remembered but the reason might be due to the presence of a big tree at the tip of the hill parallel to the church which fostered the collapse by the activity of its roots.

⁴² Informant: *Abba Därbäw Räta*; interviewed on: 11/10/2013.

⁴³ Informants: *Qés Gädam Kasé* & *Abba Därbäw Räta*; interviewed on: 11/10/2013.

The collapsed part of the hill is clearly observed. Some top parts of the hill growing bushes and grasses has slipped at the mid of the hill, immediately above the entrance of the *mäqdäs*. The rubble of the base of the frontal wall that had formed the external part of the church existed. The arch shaped entrance in to the church is still erected. There are also two broken structures standing on the base of the church which could be separate the *qané mahlét* and the *qäddäst*.



Fig.3.18 (I) the collapsed part of the church; fig. 3.18(II) the unbroken entrance of the church

There are different holes on the external wall of the *mäqdäs*, where bones of saints are deposited. Vertical pilasters with layered structures are integrated with the wall, probably these might be connected with independently hewed arch shaped pillars that are collapsed. This cave church is attempted to connect with the church of Michael through a narrow passage. The external part of the *mäqdäs* has a wide arch shaped entrance which is now narrowed by piled stone and mud to have wooden doorway. The arch shaped entrance is decorated by lined friezes. It has two hewed crosses in the right and left side of the arch, just indicating the appearance of Christian affinities.

Internally, the *mäqdäs* has two parts; the first part of the *mäqdäs* is the *gəbə'atä mäntola'et*. It is planned rectangular, measuring 4m length, 3m width & 5.5m height. The roof of this part has a doubled line dome, having four engraved crosses in its four directions. The main *mäqdäs* is accessed by a wide arch shaped entrance. Externally, it has an engraved cross proper to the curvilinear of the entrance. It is planned rectangular, measuring 7.5m length, 3.5m width & 5.5m

height. There is a big rectangular monolithic rock hewn throne. The roof is domed but it has no cross engravings around it.



Fig.3.19 The arch shaped, frieze decorated and crosses engraved entrance in to the gəbə'atä mänṭola'et

The Church of St. Michael



Fig. 3.20 View of Washa Michael, West of the hill

This church is situated in the right side of St. George's *mäqdäs*. The frontal face of its wall is conserved by stone and cement in 2007.⁴⁴ It has three *laméra* (iron) doors and two windows. The church is very wide which is divided into six parts. These parts totally measure 6m length, 25m width & 2m height. The *qəné mahlét* is separated from the *qəddäst* by a rock hewn wall. The rest

⁴⁴ Informant: Abba Därbäw Räta; interviewed on: 11/10/2013

five parts are separated by 12 pillars which are arch shapely connected. The pillars have layered structures. The holy is separated from the third division, *gəbə'atä mänṭola'et*, by two pillars.

The *gəbə'atä mänṭola'et*, covered with curtains, is also separated by pillars to separate it from the sanctuary, the fourth part. The *mäqdäs*, surrounded by the arcades of four pillars, is where the *mänbär* rested. There is a smartly hewn dome above it that has again another small dome at the mid of its part, surrounded by the archives. There are four holes under the floor of the *mäqdäs*. It is not the innermost part of the church, but the nave. The fifth part is also similar with fourth part, which has similar domed roof but no *mänbär* is placed. It could be the second *mäqdäs*.

The six part of this church has no dome shaped roof and it is the innermost/easternmost of the cave. At the wall of this part, there are pilasters attached with it. This part has three divisions and is exposed for water droplets infiltrated from the roof. The church, in general, is characterized by its blackness which might be as a result of smoke or other factors before its rehabilitation.

3.2.10 Dasnja Mädhané Aläm

This rock hewn church is found in 015 *qäbälé* (Zəbé) of the *Wäräda*, 10km from Fəlaqit taking some 15 minutes walk to the south of Washa Michael, south of Fəlaqit. The elevation of the church is 2435m a.s.l. and its UTM coordinates is 0467489 E and 1297500 N.

Some villages are settled north, east and south east of the church. It is covered by old aged trees including *yähabäsha şad* (*Juniperus procera*) and *wayra* (*Olea Africana*). It is situated near to the Church of St. Marry, a non rock hewn church located in the southern side of the cave church.

The church is reckoned to have been constructed by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D.⁴⁵ It is said that for many years, the religious activity of the church was interrupted due to the devastative war of Ahmed *Gragn*. It is after 1980s that the liturgical activities have started. This establishment is led by a monk named Abba Həruy in 1985. Until this period the cave was filled by dusts and covered by forests. But it is remembered that the cave was used to perform traditional dances and music in the cave during annual celebration. They named it "*Lalibälaw*" to mean "the Lalibela", probably to indicate its rock hewn feature.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Informants: *Mäzämr* Eyyyasu Taddässä & *Qés* Fasikaw Wäru; interviewed on: 20/10/2013

⁴⁶ Informants: *Qés* Fasikaw Wäru; interviewed on: 20/10/2013

The rock from which the church built is a single ignimbrite rock that has a rectangular shape, unexpectedly rested on a plain. The rock may has not an elongated or additional part, i.e. it is small in size or it might be cut from a big rock probably may covered by soil through time. Probably this church might be a semi-monolithic. Because some parts of the rock in the east, west and north are relatively detached from a rock. But the detached part is filled by soils except in some parts. The western facade is now conserved. But the parts around the doors are externally hewn. Currently it is sheltered by iron sheet roof in 2013 to protect the water infiltration in to the church.



Fig. 3.21 Western and southern view of the church (the area was covered by cloud at the time)

There are two cave holes in the north western part of the church used as a chapel of Abba Hərüy for four years after he stayed in the church for four years of praying. There is a small bell in the one hole. The access in to the church is in the western side which becomes narrow from time to time due to the upward expansion of a gorge in the west. The church has two rectangular entrances similar to other some rock churches of the *Wäräda* and one rectangular window which is recently modified. The wall of this part is partially piled up by stone and cement.

Interior of the church measures 6.5m length, 8.5m width & 5m height, divided in to four parts by pillars, including the *gəbə'atä mäntola'et*. There are five paired and arch shapely connected pillars supported by layers (the six one is totally removed which was in the nave). There are also pilasters attached with the wall. The arcades that connect the pillars form the ceiling of the roof.

There are different small caves along the wall and under the floor. The hole under the floor, north of the sanctuary, is temporarily closed. It has leveled entrances and has small rectangular

doors to access its internal parts. It is said that the Ark of the Covenant is found in this hole by Abba Həruy. The dome of the sanctuary is fragmented due to the infiltration of water droplets in to the church. The wall is also deteriorated (particularly east and south of the *mäqdäs*) due to this problem and conservation activity is done using hard stones mortared by cement.



Fig.3.22 (I) arch shaped view in to the sanctuary; fig.3.22 (II) a pillar in the holy

3.2.11 Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm

The church of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm (or Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm *Abunä Musé Gädäm*) is found 8kms east of Fəlaqit in 019 *qäbälé* of the *Wäräda*. It is located at elevation of 2567m a.s.l with UTM coordinates of 0476140 E & 1297278 N.

The church is far from settlement areas, hidden between two mountains bordered by a gorge, which formed a corridor overlooking to the areas as far as Tāmbäqot and Aqqat, localities of the *Wäräda*. On the top of the northern and southern mountains, Sundäj Maryam and Addis Amba Maryam (non rock churches) are located. In the gorge, there is holy spring water. The area is covered by bushes and old aged trees of *yāhabäša-şəd* (*Juniperus procare*), acacia and olive trees. To the south of the church, there are residents of monks and nuts, and cattle. The monks live together practicing agricultural activities in addition to their religious duties. The yard is fenced by iron sticks to protect its road safety from a sloping area to south of the church.



Fig.3.23(I) the environs of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, viewed from S-W; (II) the face of the church

According to *Gädlä Abunä Musé*, this church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé*, as it is stated below:

(Ge'ez version): ወእምዝ እንዝ ያንሶሱ እመሀገር ለሀገር በጽሐ ነበ ምድረ አምባ ውሃ ዘትሰመይ አዲስ አምባ መድኃኔዓለም ወበሀየ ገብረ ብዝኃ ተአምረ ወሐነፀ ቤተ ክርስቲያን በዕብን ውቁር በስሙ ለመድኃኔነ ወሐነፀ ካልዕ እለ ኢተክስቱ እስከ ይእዜ።⁴⁷

ትርጉም (in Amharic): በዚያም ከሀገር ለሀገር ሲመላለስ አምባ ውሃ ምድር አዲስ አምባ መድኃኔ ዓለም ከተባለች ቦታ ደረሰ። በዚህም ብዙ ተአምራትን አደረገ። በጌታችን ስም ከድንጋይ የተጠረበ ቤተ ክርስቲያንም ሰራ። ሌሎችንም እስካሁን ድረስ ያልተገለፁ አነጻ።

Translation: In there, while he was wandering from place to place, he arrived at the land of Amba Wuha called Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm. He has performed various miracles there and he has built a rock hewn church in the name of Our Savior. He also built others which are not still revealed.

The monastery is inhabited both by monks and nuns. According to my informants, there was a prejudice among the inhabitants and the administration on the issue whether the monastery could be only for monks or for both monks and nuns. The monks who argued to make the monastery only for monks is based on the *Gädlä Abunä Musé* which allowed the monastery only for nuns residency. But now the church is inhabited by both monks and nuns, regardless of the above quotations of the *gädal*.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Gädlä Abunä Musé*

⁴⁸ Informant: *Abba Hailä Gabriel*; interviewed on: 3/9/2013.

The cave was not revealed for many times. But it did not face the destruction of Ahmed *Gragh*. For several years, the church was administered under Addis Amba Maryam Church. It is in 2001 that the church has started its monastic administration independently.⁴⁹ This church has series of caves run east-west. The first series of the caves is the main church that has a storey and underground. The underground is a chapel for monks and nuns. Its external part of the wall is filled by stone and cement and is protected by iron shelters. It has one *laméra* doorway. It is round in plan. Two rectangular non arch shaped columns are erected. The main church has three entrances with *laméra* doors for males, females and priests. Along the entrance of males, there is one hole previously water conservation pool, now it is used for baptizing place. Through this entrance, a small anteroom leading to the chanting place is accessed. It is partially conserved and rebuilt.

Interior part of the church is built magnificently. The chanting place is very wide which is round in plan, encircling the holy and the nave. Its wideness decreases towards the eastern direction of this part. In the chanting place there are burials of saints under the floor and collections of bones by wood boxes put in the eastern part, to the entrance of the priests. The parts in the northern side that served for space of males is wider than the space in the females, southern part. It becomes like a corridor in the south eastern side of the sanctuary. The most impressive feature in the chanting place, along the western entrance of the holy, is an umbrella unique in its materials, skills, and architectures. It is said that it is believed to be used by *Abunä Musé* just as a "florescence light" and as an umbrella during liturgical activities. It used to give light though now is faded.⁵⁰

It is roped with a benched wood attached with the wall and roof of the church. It is intertwined from a bark probably *gərar* (acacia, available in the area), rope and flat thin wood. It is cemented with different colored mortars probably prepared from soils. The umbrella clearly produced by local hand craft skill is unique that accentuated the local craft technology just similarly prepared in the skill of the local people used to make *dawujja* (a local carpet prepared from bark of trees).

⁴⁹ Informant: *Abba Zéna Täka*; interviewed on: 3/9/2013.

⁵⁰ Informant: *Abba Hailä Gabriel*; interviewed on: 3/9/2013.



Fig. 3.24 the umbrella utilized by Abunä Musé, hanged in the chanting place



Fig.3.25 internal part of the umbrella

The other astonishing features that the umbrella are the pictures depicted in it. These pictures are 120 Families of Jesus Christ (including the 12 Apostles, 36 Female Saints and the 72 Pupils). The iconographies are depicted serially at the edge and the inner most part of the umbrella. There are written *Ge'ez* versions probably to express the picture depicted on it. But most of the pictures

and the written versions are fading and removing. The term "*ሐዋርያ*/*Hawarya* (meaning apostle) is clearly identified.

The umbrella is also decorated by cross shaped, zigzagged and lined features. White, red and black colors are used to architect the umbrella. My informant (*Abba Hailä Gabriel*) told me that though the umbrella's feature are fading and removing, the removal part is never seen on the floor. The umbrella is still immovably servicing in the church.

The other part of the church is the nave. It is detached from the parent rock in its all sides, only attached on its roof with the rock. It is a monolithic nave. One can round it externally through the chanting place. This makes the church unique among the churches of the *wäräda* and perhaps in the country. The shape of this nave, which includes the holy, the *gəbə'atä mänṭola'et* and the sanctuary, is not fully rectangular in its four sides. The wall in the western side is really rectangular. The northern part has also relatively rectangular structure, very elongated west to east. The eastern part of the wall becomes less rectangular and tended to be circular creating a narrow corridor and the southern wall is almost circular.

The western rectangular wall is painted by red and black colors no longer clearly visible for eye. There are also different mural paintings. The pictures are visible in some parts indicating persons above necks. There are also many pictures which are not clearly seen. On the side of this wall, there are two small cross shaped opened windows. The Qəddəst has three rectangular entrances which has three old aged wooden doorways. The entrances are carved rectangular. The southern entrance is very high and is divided by a benched wood. Two rectangular and arch shaped pillars stand separating the holy and the sanctuary. Three *laméra* doors are attached between the two pillars, and the southern and northern wall of the sanctuary.

The *gəbə'atä mänṭola'et* and the sanctuary are separated by other two well hewn arch shaped rectangular pillars, having two side arching. The sanctuary is protected by curtains. There are five vertically hewed rectangular features. These vertical buttresses are integral with the wall of the sanctuary which are partially painted by red colors. Above the throne (not rock hewn), there is domed roof that has an engraved cross in its southern side. There is a hole measuring 1.5m height.

The *Bétülhém* (*Bétü Egziabhér*) hewn from the parent rock, is situated east of the sanctuary, along the entrance of the priests. There is also one hole which has narrow entrances and wide internal part. It was served as a chapel for monks or hermits.

Moreover, there are other series of caves to the west of the main church, which are architecturally less significant. The first part, at the western end is now established as a church, the church of Saint Arséma. Internally it has only two parts. The first division has two roughly hewn columns. These parts were not originally built as sanctuaries rather were caves of properties. The internal arrangement clearly shows their purpose. There is also another part between the two churches which is a treasury cave.

3.2.12 Tāmbäqot Mādhané Aläm

This cave church is found in 022 *qäbälé* (Aqqat), 25km east of Fəlaqit. It is found at elevation of 2588m a.s.l with 0486391 E and 1292229 N UTM coordinates. This church is inhabited by different trees dominated by acacia. The rock of the church is brown and white ignimbrite rock.



Fig.3.26 Tāmbäqot Mādhané Aläm, south western view

The church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the fourth century A.D. It is believed lost for more than 4 centuries due to the war of *Ahmed Gragn* until it is discovered in 1983 after several years of being buried. Before its discovery, a myth was telling among the people about it.⁵¹

⁵¹Informant: *Qés Mulu Ayänäw*; interviewed on: 19/9/2013.

The hill was used as a pastoral land. Its hint was discovered by cattle keepers. Local excavation was used to get the entrance of the cave. The first entrance, the anteroom, the entrances in to the chanting place, and the widow correspondent to entrance of males were filled by soil and dust. After excavating and discovery of the church, the issue has been addressed for higher church administrators and tourism officers. Later, it is decided to be a church by the Synod of EOTC (see Appendix III). The rock is now sheltered by iron sheets, in 2011, to protect water infiltration in to the church. The discovery of this cave church on the hill creates opportunity for another future archaeological works in the area. Cross, small bell, small pottery, fumes of incense, and chalices are discovered.



Fig.3.27 the treasures discovered in the cave in 1983

The war of Ahmed *Grag*n is suggested to be the cause of lost of the church which may has a reality because on August, 2013, a small cave with two short columns is discovered in the vicinity of this cave church, near the monastery of *Gädämä* Efrata, a non rock hewn church. It is opened while the area is drained by huge flood. This implies that the area was devastated by war or conflicts. The religious fathers of the time might use such small caves to save the properties of the church. The discovered materials in the cave and its internal division are indicative as it was a church.

The discovered church's average measurement is 16m length, 14m width and 4m height. One common entrance leads in to the *qomä bə'esé* (vestibule) of the church. The roof of the vestibule is partially collapsed. Probably it might have a storey parallel to the opened window, perpendicular to the males' entrance. It has two entrances for males and females to access the

internal parts of the church. It has the three common divisions separated by columns, which are connected each other arch shapely. They are supported by *mäqännächa* and are connected with the wall by pilasters. There is one broken column remained only attaching with its base. The *mäqdäs*, the most inner part, has three rectangular rock hewn thrones, now the throne of Holy Trinity, Mädhané Aläm and St. Marry from north to south, respectively. There is a space in the north-eastern side of the *mäqdäs* hewed in some extent.

3.2.13 Aqqat Marqos

This cave is located in the nearby area south of Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm, 5km from Aqqat, a small town along *the Chinese Road*. It is located at elevation of 2659m.a.s.l with 0486242 E & 1291893 N UTM Coordination. The area surrounding it and Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm is now protected for new forestation activity. Different wild animals are found in it.

The cave is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. Its religious activity was not further continued for many centuries just for a similar legend of the case of Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm. It becomes a church following the discovery of Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm.⁵² It was served for herders to keep their cattle.⁵³

Unlike its internal arrangements, some of its features and bones found in small caves are indicatives that it was a church. The cave has two entrances in the north and south western side. Internally, it has different parts. The first part, accessed by in the northern, is divided by three crudely hewn columns uncommonly forming a row north to south. There is another column to the eastern most part of this space. This part had must be the *mäqdäs* of the church since it lies in the eastern end of the cave. But it has no domed roof or rock hewn throne. The division is not common in the tradition. This part is exposed for water droplets from the roof. The other major part of the cave, deeper than the first part, is found after a stepped entrance from the first part or through the south-western entrance. There is one inclined small window for the entrance of light. There are also five poorly arch shaped columns separating the cave in to different parts. East of this part, a deep sacred water conservation pool is hewn under the ground of the church that can be accessed through sloping stair to use it for curing diseases.

⁵² Informant: *Qés* Ambaw Addissé; interviewed on: 21/9/2013.

⁵³ Informant: *Wäyzäro* Gəmbé Mäkönnän; interviewed on: 21/9/2013.



Fig. 3.28 poorly carved columns

Above this sacred water hole, there is an engraved cross on the roof. There is also unlikely situated dome shaped roof to the westernmost of this part. The northern and western part of the wall is fragmented due to water droplets filtrating from the roof and entering through small windows hewn along the wall, and by the penetration of roots of trees in to the wall.

3.2.14 Gərar Maryam

This cave church is found in 043 *qäbälé* (Boya) at 43kms east of Fəlaqit and 15kms north of Koso Mändär, a village along *the Chinese Road*. The location of the church is at 2929m a.s.l. with 050225 E and 1310318 N UTM coordinates. The church is far from the villages settled to the west of the church. Burial sites are found around the church. The environment of the church is characterized by leveled escarpments and the existing forest, dominated by *yähabäša şəd* (*Juniperus procera*) and *wäyra* (*Olea Africana*). Trees of *shinät* (*Myrica salicifolia*), *qulqual* (*Euphorbia abyssinica*), *embis* (*Allophylus abyssinicus*), *shola* (*Ficus carica*), *asta* (*Erica arborea*), *kətkəta* (*Dodonaea angustifolia*), etc are fund. The church is built from a weathered ignimbrite rock that forms horizontally stepped escarpment.

The church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the fourth century A.D. Though the time is not clear, it has been lost for long years concealed by forests (probably after 16th century). The church is discovered while a local person was driving away a deer; the deer entered in to the hole of the present church and the man discovered the entrance of the church.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Informant: *Abbohay* Addisu Yaläw ; interviewed on: 29/9/2013.

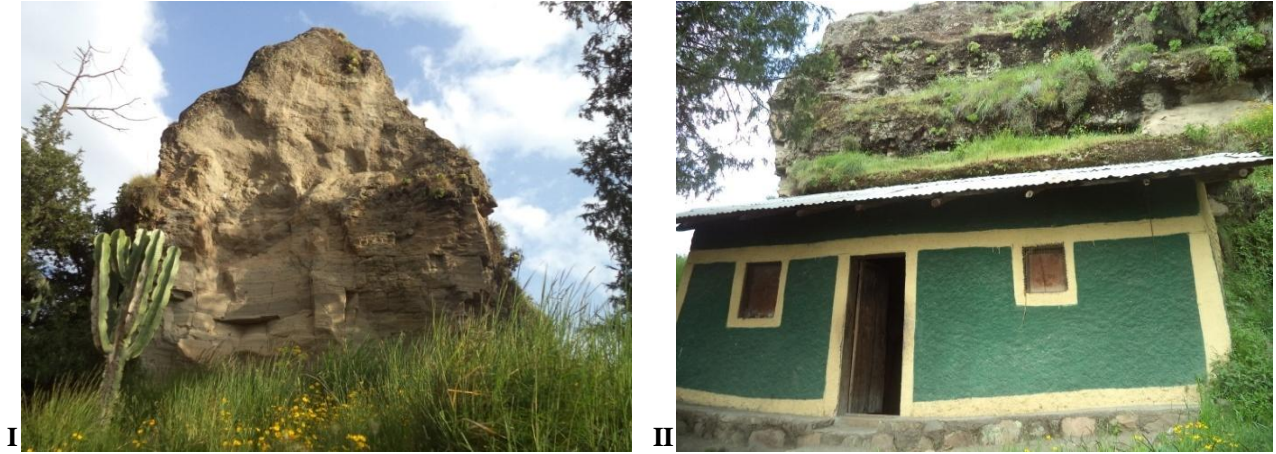


Fig.3.29 (I) the northern facade of the church, proper to the nave; fig.3.29(II) western face, the entrance in to the church

The access in to the church has two wooden doors in the east (entrance of priests) and west (entrance of both males and females). The eastern and western face of the church is conserved filled by stone, mud and cement. In the eastern side, there is a small cave that previously used as *Bätälhém*, now replaced by a wooden made small *Bätälhém* in front of it. The northern face of the church views an oval shape which consists most parts of the nave. The frontal roof of the western part is covered by iron sheets. There are two new windows covered by lattice.

The first part of the church, *qomä bə'esé*, is newly added to widen the church before twenty years. There are paintings of different saints probably dated before 100 years, replaced by new paintings before 20 years.⁵⁵ They are placed unsafely on the wall of the first part and the *qəddəst*. The Saints in the old paintings include *Abunä Gäbrä Mänfäs Qəddus*, Baptism of Jesus Christ, St. Marry heralded by Angel Gabriel, the birth of Jesus Christ, Holy Trinity, and Crucifixion of Christ. The painter used cloth and different colors. One wooden door that has arch and lentil leads to the *qəné mahlét* and the holy. There are two temporarily closed windows. Two rectangular pillars are found here. They are not connected arch shapely. One of these columns is broken; a chunk of its part is remained on the roof and at its base. They are piled up by stone to support the damaged part. There are different small caves in this part where bones of saints are rested. The northern wall of the *qəné mahlét* is highly fragmented due penetration of roots of trees.

⁵⁵ Informants: *Abbohay Addisu Yaläw* ; *Qés Gädäm Kassé*; interviewed on (both informants): 29/9/2013.

The *mäqdäs* is independently hewn, excavated in its two sides. Its external wall is painted by new pictures of saints, covered by curtains. It has three wooden doorways in the way that a sanctuary has fulfilled for liturgical activities. Three "monkey head" windows existed in its internal western part. They are filled up during painting activities on the external wall of the *mäqdäs*. There are two smartly hewed pillars forming the arcading of the ceiling of the *mäqdäs*'s roof. They are rectangular in shape and are supported by two separately layered *mäqännächa*. Pilasters are matched with the wall connecting pillars by the arcades. These two pillars, some parts of the wall and the roof are lime-plastered. There are also opened small windows to the entrance of light.

Two rock hewn monolithic thrones are erected, from which one of them is not functional. The roof of the *mäqdäs* is divided in to five parts by the arcades of the pillars. Two of these parts are domed. In one of the domes, there is *qäraniyo mäsqäl*, a cross shape feature inserted in the dome. The other parts of the roof are rectangular and flat shapes. The eastern part of the wall is piled of stone and mud. The *mäqdäs* is very wide which measures 8 meters length, 8 meters width and 5.45 meters height.

3.2.15 Zəjjä Maryam

The cave church of Zəjjä Maryam, 45km to the east of Fəlaqit, is found in 028 *qäbälé* (Təmtəmat). It takes 30 minutes walk from Təmtəmat, a small town along the road of Wäldiya-Gayənt. It is located at elevation of 2775m a.s.l with 0496184 E & 1296221 N UTM coordinates.

It is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. Its liturgical activity was said to be interrupted by *Ahmed Gragn* until it is reopened by local rulers, Toma and Natros, who came from Amhara Saynt during the reign of Fasilädäs (1633-1667).⁵⁶

It is built under a cliff. The environment with marvelous landscape setting is covered by forests dominated by *yähäbäsha şəd* (*Juniperus procera*) and *wäyra* (*Olea Africana*). There are a number of wild animals including tiger, ape, monkey, hyrax, and klipspringer. The people are settled around the church, above and below the cliff. Burials places are observed in the yard. The access to the church is in the west face of the cliff. The frontal facade is walled by new building

⁵⁶ Informants: *Qés Maräg Fäntayä*; *Ato Mogäs Täkaləgn*; interviewed on: 23/9/2013.

using stone layers and cement, consisting the *qomä bə'esé*. North of the church, there is burial cave that has narrow entrance in to the church.



Fig.3.31 Zəjjä Qəddäst Maryam, western view

Internally, on the rock hewn wall, in side of the *qomä bə'esé*, there are paintings which are believed to be the 17th century A.D drawings,⁵⁷ characterized by lined features. They are painted on a cloth similar with Gərar Maryam. The access into the chanting place is through two wooden rectangular entrances of males and females. There are four rectangular pillars separating the three common parts of the church. They are connected arch shapely supported by *mäqännächa*. Pilasters are integrated with the wall and connected with the pillars. In the *qəné mahlét*, there are three windows with different size and shape. There are also burial holes in this part on and under the floor. The *mäqdäs* is separated from the *mäqdäs* by pillars. It has a dome shaped roof. The dome is painted by different colors as it is existed in the church of Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus.

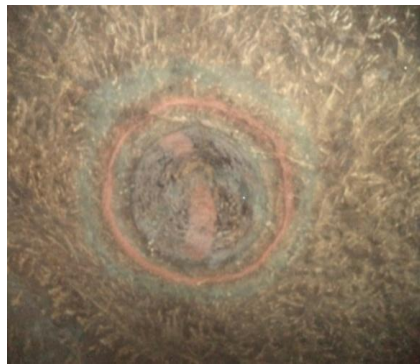


Fig. 3.32 painted dome in the church of Zəjjä Maryam

⁵⁷ Informant: *Qés* Maräg Fäntayä; interviewed on: 23/9/2013.

3.2.16 Däbrä Sina Maryam

The cave church of *Däbrä Sina Maryam* is found in 025 *qäbälé* (Tajja), 55kms east of Fəlaqit. Its elevation is 2731m a.s.l and its UTM coordination is 0496817 E and 1297540 N. It takes 35 minutes walk north of Zəjjä Maryam by crossing Təlqit River.

It is found at the mid of an escarpment runs as far as Yädoga Abbo, in the west. The cliff has sloping character down to the west, forming the mount of Dufti. The area is covered by different trees, dominated by *yähäbäsha şad*(*Juniperus procera*) and *wäyra*(*Olea Africana*). It is far from the villages.

The church is believed to be constructed by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. The cave was lost for many years after the war of Ahmed *Gragñ*. The frontal part of the church is believed collapsed during the war, which is locally conserved in 2010. Later it is discovered by a monk, *Abba Wäldä Gabriel*, who discovered the *tabot* of St. Marry within the cave in 1948. It is administered under Yädoga Abbo Church.⁵⁸



Fig.3.33 Däbrä Sina Maryam, viewed from south west

There are a cross shaped windows in its western facade, which are common features in the churches of Lalibela. It has two entrances to access the anteroom. Two smartly arch shaped pillars existed. The part of the wall and the part of the pillar's arch in the south is collapsed. To get the next parts of the church, one door is used both for males and females, which is

⁵⁸ Informant: *Deacon Asäffa Däsalägn*; interviewed on: 24/9/2013.

rectangular. Two rectangular and opened windows are found along the wall of this part. The part of the wall above and below the windows is decorated by friezes.

After the anteroom, the four properly hewn arch shaped pillars separated the three common parts of the church. The incised layers of some pillars of this church are similar with Tāmbäqot Mādhané Aläm. One of the pillars in this part is decorated by engraved symbols. The arch of the pillars is decorated by friezes. Pilasters are integrated with the wall. The holy of holies is separated from the holy by pillars. There is one rectangular rock hewn throne. A hole is found in the northern part of the sanctuary.

3.2.17 Yädoga Abbo

The cave church of Yädoga Abbo is found in 025 *qäbälé* of the *Wäräda*, 55km east of Fəlaqit. It is found east of *Däbrä Sina Maryam*, western end of the highland of Dufti. It is located at elevation of 2691m a.s.l. with 0494970 E and 1297755 N UTM coordinates. The area is scarcely covered by trees of *yähäbäsha şad* (*Juniperus procera*) and *wäyra* (*Olea Africana*). Burial sites are observed southern part of the church.



Fig.3.34 (I) western side of the cave; fig.3.34 (II) eastern side of the cave

The church is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the fourth century A.D.⁵⁹ There are two wooden doors to enter in to the church. The front of females' entrance is relatively vaulted. The church has the three common parts, the *qəné mahlét*, the *qəddəst* and the *mäqdäs*. Three

⁵⁹ Informant: *Qés Däsälägn Sättargé*; interviewed on: 24/9/2013.

relatively rectangular columns are erected in the chanting place. They are not connected arch shapely. Some of them have layers. To separate the sanctuary from the holy, columns are attached with a wall made of mud and stone. The church is roughly hewn, in general, and there are no unique features in this church to mention here.

3.2.18 Dufti Gabriel

This cave church is located north of *Däbrä Sina Maryam* in 029 *qäbälé* (Hamusit). It is located at elevation of 2995m.a.s.l with UTM coordination of 0497511 E and 1298635 N. It is built in the hill on the highland of Dufti. It is not covered by trees.

It is believed to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the 4th century A.D. local traditions indicate that the church did not give liturgical service for many years and it has turned in to a church in 2013. Before that, the cave was inhabited by some family groups. Later the families left the cave by building another house in the nearby area.⁶⁰ I was lucky to meet an old man (*Qés Dämssé Kidé*) who was born and grow up in the cave with his families who lived in the cave.

This cave church may create an argument whether it was originally a church or not. Because, its architectural features and Christian affinities, if there, are totally disappeared. But, before three years, during forestation activity on the top of the hill, different church treasures were found but who take the treasures is not yet known.⁶¹ The columns are removed to make the cave suitable for family's domicile, remained with some signs. The foundation of different water conservation pools, a common feature in most churches of the *wäräda* are important indication as the cave was originally a church.

After understanding as it was previously a church, the people of the area discussed to make it a church and they have blessed the cave and entered the *tabot* of St. Gabriel in to the cave. Now the cave is divided in sanctuary and the holy by newly added building, having only two parts.

⁶⁰ Informant: *Qés Dämssé Kidé*; interviewed on: 26/9/2013.

⁶¹ Informant: *Qés Tädé Wanaw*; interviewed on: 26/9/2013.



Fig.3.35 (I) a water conservation pool; fig. 3.35 (II) Priest Dämssé Kidé

3.2.19 Dufti Mädhané Aläm

The cave church of Dufti (*Amsalä Kərstos*) Mädhané Aläm is found in Hamusit, *qäbälé* 029, 50 minutes walk along the highland of Dufti, north of Dufti Gabriel. It is far 44km from Fəlaqit. It is located at elevation of 3060m a.s.l with UTM coordinates of 0496894 E and 1302156 N. It is found on the top of a mountain, between two hills formed on the mount. It is surrounded by cliff in its southern, western and northern side. The villages are found east of the church.



Fig. 3.36 the hill where the church is found, viewed from south

This church is said to have been built by *Abunä Musé* in the fourth century A.D. The *gädäl* of *Abunä Musé* described the area, *Goha Şəbah*, where this church has been built.⁶² This church is mentioned to be rehabilitated in the 17th century (Tesfaye 2013).

⁶² Informant: *Abba Matäbé Alamrräw*; interviewed on: 27/9/2013.

There are more than 13 water conservation pools. The widest water pool is found to the northern hill of the church. The water pools along the church are sacred used for curing purpose. The two sacred water pools are found north and north-eastern part of the church. Some of them are sustainable throughout the year. The rock part of the church is enclosed by new building due to the collapsing of the chanting place. This new building is roofed by congregated iron sheets with conically shaped roof. It is done replacing the former main rock which is destroyed naturally. In this church, I was not allowed to observe the internal part of the church during the second trip. That was some treasures of the churches stole and the church keeper did not allow me to observe the church's internal part. But the necessary information of the church's internal part is gathered during the third trip in February.

The un-collapsed part of the church (consisting of the *qaddäst* and the *mäqdäs*) has externally a rectangular shape and it is freed from the rock in its eastern, southern and western facades. It has two entrances framed rectangular, which have similar feature with many rock churches of the *Wäräda*. The columns in the nave separates the two parts, the holy and the sanctuary. They are arch shaped but have no layers.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION OF THE ROCK HEWN CHURCHES

4.1 Review of the Types of Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqét

The rock hewn churches of Ethiopia carved from rock, by consider their manner of constructing or hewing, are three types: Built- up Cave Churches, Rock Hewn Cave Churches, and Rock Hewn (monolithic & semi-monolithic) Churches. The rock hewn churches of Mäqét are grouped under rock hewn cave and monolithic churches. There is no built up cave church in the *Wäradä*. The largest numbers of the rock hewn churches of the *Wäradä* are included under rock hewn cave churches. The types of the churches are summarized in the table below.

No	Names of the Rock Hewn Churches	Category	No	Names of the Rock Hewn Churches	Category
1	<i>Däbrä Qäṭṭin Maryam</i>	Cave church	11	Washa Michael	Cave church
2	<i>Abunä Aron Mänkrawi</i>	"	12	Ṭämbäqot Mädhané Aläm	"
3	Gəbşawit Abbo	"	13	Aqqat Marqos	"
4	Quraqura Maryam	"	14	Zəjjä Maryam	"
5	Abäkäna Abbo	"(?)	15	<i>Däbrä Sina Maryam</i>	"
6	Nazugn Maryam	Monolithic church	16	Gərar Maryam	"
7	A'emad Šəllasé	Cave church	17	Yädoga Abbo	"
8	Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm	"(?)	18	Dufti Gabriel	"
9	Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus	"	19	Dufti Mädhané Aläm	"
10	Dasnja Mädhané Aläm	"			

Table 4.1 Types of Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqét (Source: Own survey)

The church of Abäkäna Abbo and Dufti Mädhané Aläm have clearly a semi-monolithic nave and the collapse of their chanting places confused to say perfectly they are caves. Particularly, the exterior western side of Abäkäna Abbo indicates that the church could be a semi-monolithic church. The sanctuary of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, consisting of the holy and the sanctuary is clearly hewed in its all sides, identified as a monolithic nave within a cave.

The only rock hewn monolithic church in Mäqét is Nazugn Maryam. This church is perfectly detached from the living rock in its all sides, creating a wide space between the parent rock and the independently standing church. It is a monolithic church planned rectangular with no suspicion. Except some suspicions, there is no clear semi-monolithic rock hewn church in the *Wäräda*. Most of the cave churches are externally hewn around their entrances though it is not enough to say a semi-monolithic church. But all of the churches are hewed internally. There is no church widened from a natural cave.

4.2 Why the Tradition is Cave Oriented?

Obviously, the rock hewn church tradition of Mäqét is cave oriented than monolithic structures and built- up cave churches. The hewing manner of the churches of the *Wäräda*, which is cave oriented, might be determined by the setting/placement and nature of the rocks. A single rock rested on stabled environment could be matched for the excavation of monolithic or semi-monolithic churches. Such rocks are witnessed to be used to excavate monolithic churches, for example, Nazugn Maryam in Mäqét; Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm and *Wudmaw Giyorgis* in Gayənt and many of the rock hewn monolithic and semi-monolithic churches of Lasta. The rocks which found along escarpments or mountains were better situated for the excavation of cave churches, a case which matches with the existing of many cave churches in Mäqét *Wäräda*.

Moreover, the geological nature of ignimbrite rocks might not be suitable for excavation of monolithic churches in Mäqét. These types of rocks are vulnerable for weathering activities and they may not longer exist if they built monolithic. That is why most of the churches with ignimbrite rocks are hewn caves in which the internal parts of the churches are protected by the thick and untouched part of the rock that belongs with an escarpment or mountain. Thus, the softness or the huge availability of ignimbrite rocks than sandstones and basaltic rocks in the area determine the tradition in Mäqét to be characterized by cave church oriented.

Unless the nature and setting of the rocks determined the tradition to be cave oriented, the builders had an interest of excavating monolithic churches, as it is indicated in the church of Addis Amba Mädhane Aläm-a church with a monolithic nave within a cave. If its monolithic structure would be out of the cave, it could no longer exist.

The church of Abäkäna Abbo is challengeable to determine it as a cave church. It could be a semi-monolithic rock hewn church for the following reasons: 1^{stly}, the living rock from which the church built is found on a stable environment, which is not attached to a hill or a cliff. 2^{ndly}, the passage found western side of the church is clearly formed to detach the church from the parent rock. 3^{rdly}, its ignimbrite rock is the most hardest than other ignimbrite rocks of the churches that could be match to excavate a monolithic hypogeum. Finally, the architectural features within the church suspected that the church might be a semi-monolithic externally. Because such architectural features are common in monolithic churches.

The absence of built-up cave churches in Mäqét Wäräda might be due to the absence of wide natural caves formed from basaltic rocks that could protect the churches for a longer period of time. It is known that the built up church of Yimrhannä Kərstos, for example, is under a protective of big cave, naturally basaltic rock. Due to this, unlike the area of Lasta, built-up cave churches are not available in the area of Mäqét.

The excavation method of rock hewn churches, which actually determine the hewn manner of the churches, is based on downward, upward and horizontal ways. The exterior of Nazugn Maryam church is excavated downwardly, in which the excavation started at the top of the rock that made the church a monolithic. But its internal part is shaped using the three methods of excavation. The excavation of other cave churches was started at the bottom of the rocks horizontally (beginning from excavating the entrances) and their internal parts are widened excavating upward, downward and horizontally.

Despite the fact, the cave oriented tradition of the rock hewn churches in Mäqét is somewhat changing. In order to conserve the churches, a newer and unfamiliar tradition on the rock hewn churches has been introduced. Some of the rock hewn cave churches in the Wäräda are now enclosed by new masonry buildings, which actually changed the *tradition/history* of the churches.

4.3 Discussion of Some Selected Architectures of the Churches

The rock hewn churches of Shädäho-Mäqét have various features to compare and discuss among themselves and with other rock churches of the country. Reasonably, the features selected are existed in different parts of rock hewn churches of the *Wäradä* and in other some churches of the country particularly in Tigray and Lasta as well as in Gayänt, Farṭa and Wadla districts. There are also some features which only existed in the churches of the *Wäradä*.

A). Internal Divisions

It is not to be acquisitive, but it is likely important to discuss both the common and some of the unique internal arrangements of the churches. In the case of EOTC, the internal arrangements of churches are adjusted in relation to the services given in the church. These parts are conceptualized among the believers in the way that they can be accessed by whom and when. It is the chanting place that can be accessed by many persons because many of the religious activities are performed in this part. The rest of the two parts of the church can be accessed by some believers such as communicants and priests. It is not allowed to access the Holy of Holies except the priests in every church. Sanctuary may have more than one division.

The other additional parts are the *qomä bə'esé*, a space for the standing of persons who do not able enter in to the internal parts, and the *gəbə'atä mänṭola'et*, a space between the holy and the sanctuary which only accessed by priests. The *qomä bə'esé* in the case of some churches is anteroom or a passage that has different shapes and sizes. Some churches also may have separated *məqwamä anst* (an anteroom accessed by females alone). There are also churches with different shapes and sizes of chapels and small caves. All of these parts are separated either by walls or columns.

By and large, the rock hewn churches of Mäqét *Wäradä* include the above internal planning, except the church of Dufti Gabriel that has only two recently separated parts. *Qomä bə'esé* (the anteroom) in the churches of *Abunä Aron*, *Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm*, *Ṭämbäqot Mädhané Aläm* and *Däbrä Sina Maryam* is presented. Only the church of *Gəbşawit Abbo* has *məqwamä anst*/anteroom. The other churches have no this part, but the churches whose chanting room has collapsed and replaced by another buildings are not clear to determine at this level.

The church of *Abunä Aron* has different spaces and chapels internally. The long and narrow inaccessible passage inside of the sanctuary of *Quraqura Maryam* is uncommon feature of sanctuaries in the *Wäräda*. Unlike other churches, the internal arrangement of the rock church of *Aqqat Marqos* is also uncommon. Its sanctuary is placed in the western end of the cave. The part in the east side is not also arranged in a way situated for church service. Probably, this cave might had dual purpose, of which the western part could be a church.

Most of the churches have *gəb'atä mäntola'et* separated by columns and walls. Most of the churches' sanctuary is planned rectangular. Above all, the rock hewn church of *Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm* is distinct in its internal planning. That is, the monolithic structure of the nave within the cave as well as the storey and ground structure (a chapel) of the church. The church of *A'emad Šəllasé* has also a ground but now it is not functional.

The internal division of rock hewn churches of Ethiopia have been influenced by the cultures of living and introduced elements. The existence of the basilica of naves observed in the churches of *Lasta* and *Tigray* are supposed to be adapted from the Middle-East Christians, however (Buxton 1947; Pierce 1970; Finneran 2007; Phillipson 2009; Natnael 2012). The naves in the rock hewn churches of *Mäqät* resemble these structures. But the west-east internal arrangements of the churches are common in the country even if before the introduction of Christianity such as at *Yeha* (Sergew 1972; Pearce 1970).

The *Aksumite* tradition has a great influence on the later internal arrangements of the rock hewn churches of the country. The internal division of the churches of the *Wäräda* arch shaped columns are evidenced in different churches of *Lalibela* and *Tigray*. The three common parts are adjusted in relation to religious services. Anterooms are also common in many churches such as *Däbrä Damo* and *Michael Däbrä Säläm* in *Tigray* (Phillipson 2009). Such features are used in the rock hewn churches as a waiting space before accessing the chanting place and other internal parts of the churches.

Gəbə'atä mäntola'et, separated by a rock hewn wall, in the churches of *St. Giyorgis* at *Washa Michael* and *Quraqura Maryam*, is similarly existed at the church of *Bəlbala Qirqos* in *Lasta* (Natnael 2012). Moreover, the internal divisions of the churches of the *Wäräda* also have a clear relation with the rock churches of *Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm* in *Gayənt* and the cave churches of

Yäçira Mädhane Aläm, Yohannes Wäldä Nägodguad and Washa Michael in Wadla; it may be due to that they might be built in same time.

B). Walls and Roofs

Here, the discussion considers both the exterior and interior features of the wall and the roof of the churches, in which the manner of the excavation determines the types of the churches. Externally, walls and roofs of the cave churches of Shädäho-Mäqét experiences poor workmanship. The wall is hewn mainly around doors or windows otherwise the original main rock is not touched by the excavator or not hewn at all. The exterior wall of the cave churches is not hewn except Nazugn Maryam and frontal parts of Gəbşawit Abbo and *Däbrä* Sina Maryam.

Gəbşawit Abbo's frontal facade is hewn around the doors and windows and to form the roof's edge. The rock girdle of the wall below the windows is identical with the layer integrated with the wall of Abäkäna Abbo. Similarly, some parts of the western side of *Däbrä* Sina Maryam is hewn to form the cross shaped windows. There is no clear indication whether the external wall of many churches was hewn or not due to the replacements as well as conservation activities done. Probably, the locally conserved frontal face of Dasnja Mädhane Aläm and the collapsed part of Abäkäna Abbo might have a similar wall structure of the above churches.

It is only the church of Nazugn Maryam that all facades of the wall are hewn by detaching the church from the living rock. Its exterior wall exhibits similar shapes of blind windows protected by the edge of the roof. The wall is supported by vertically and horizontally hewed layers. The *maqannacha*/rock girdle and the vertical buttresses pass on the wall separating the windows and its rectangular shape magnify the relationship particularly with *Bétä* Abba Libanos, *Bétä* Maryam, *Bétä* Mädhane Aläm, *Bétä* Amanuel and Gännätä Maryam in Lasta.

Internally, the walls of the churches are hewn, not widen from an existed natural cave. In terms of shape, many of the churches are not fully rectangular by their wall plan. The wall of Tämbäqot Mädhane Aläm, *Abunä* Aron, *Däbrä Qättin*, Washa Michael (except St. George), Aqqat Marqos, Yädoga Abbo, *Dabra* Sina and Zəjjä Maryam are not clearly rectangular in plan. The wall of Addis Amba Mädhane Aläm, except in its northern and western part of the holy, is circularly planned. It is relatively better hewn than others.

The interior wall of Nazugn Maryam; the sanctuary wall of Gərar Maryam, Bêtä Hara Eiyäsus, and St. George at Washa Michael have rectangular features. Except the nave of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, the other churches have no detached wall from the parent rock. The vertically integrated structures of the walls are two types: pilasters and buttresses. Pilasters of walls are curved adjacent to arch shaped pillars, which resemble features of the pillars found in the churches. The wall at Addis Amba has vertical buttresses, not attached with columns.

These features are more developed on the wall structures of the churches of Tigray and Lalibela. The horizontal layers and pilasters which featured the monastery of *Däbrä* Damo are later experienced in the church of Yimrhannä Kərstos and Lalibela (Buxton & Mathews 1971; Phillipson 2009; Natnael 2012).



Fig.4.1 (I) the horizontal layers and buttresses on the eastern facade of Nazugn Maryam; fig. 4.1 (II) western facade of Bêtä Amanuel

Regarding the exterior part of their roof, Nazugn Maryam church could be clearly detached from the parent rock, having an edge to protect the wall. This might makes the church similar with the brand rock hewn churches of Lalibela. But to be sure, the flat stone and cement loaded on the roof create an obstacle to observe its original situation. The exterior roof of other rock hewn churches is not detached from the main rock, attached with the escarpment or the hill. Though it is internal, Abäkäna Abbo forms edge to protect the wall and the windows.

Internally the roof of the churches is hewed which must be excavated to widen the internal part of the churches. Except the domes, arcades and cross engravings, the roof of the churches in Mäqét is not architected. What simply observed in their roof and wall is the signs of the

construction materials used during excavation. That is the roof is similar with their wall (except the external wall of Nazugn Maryam and Gəbşawit Abbo), roughly hewn unlike the churches of Lalibela and around it.

C). Windows and Doors

The structures, features and styles of doors and windows are also important parts in the rock churches of Mäqét. They resemble at least three obvious shapes: Rectangular with or without Aksumite styles, semi-circular or oval shapes and irregular shapes. The entrances in the churches of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, *Däbrä* Sina Maryam, Dasnja Mädhané Aläm, Zəjjä Maryam, Dufti Mädhané Aläm and Gərar Maryam are similarly framed rectangular.

Gəbşawit Abbo has a *monkey head* structure at the top but the bottom may be filled up by dusts deposited for several times. This door structure is similar with door styles of various rock hewn churches of Aksum and Lalibela as well as other churches such as Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm and *Wudmaw Giyorgis*⁶³ in Gayənt. The doors in the church of Abäkäna Abbo distinctly have oval or wedged shaped features. Such features of a door are existed at Addi Qeshi Mädhané Aläm church in Tigray.⁶⁴

The windows which are rectangular (at their base) and semi-circular (at the top) resemble a pointed feature at the top. These windows are two types: blind and opened. Both blind and opened windows are observed in the frontal facades of Nazugn Maryam and Gəbşawit Abbo. Opened windows with identical features are also found in the church of Abäkäna Abbo. These windows have similar features with the windows or door structures in Lalibela. The typical examples are the windows curved at the frontal facade of Bétä Abba Libanos.

Rectangular windows with no distinct features are curved in the churches of *Däbrä* Sina Maryam, Gərar Maryam and *Abunä* Aron. The windows in the sanctuary of Gərar Maryam resemble square projections with *monkey head* corner posts, which clearly manifests the tracery

⁶³ *Wudmaw Giyorgis*, some 10 minutes walk to the west of Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm church, is named by the local people to refer to a church without any religious service. It is said to be built during the time of Zagwe Dynasty. It is not reestablished, left probably since the 16th century. It is a monolithic monument surrounded by roughly hewn columns and manifests some features with the churches in Lalibela & Mäqét. It has three sanctuaries with two rock hewn thrones and different projections of roof. The floor of this monument is filled of dusts and soils and is exposed for floods. Olivia trees are grown on the exterior of the roof.

⁶⁴ <http://taiwandiscovery.wordpress.com/2013/03/16/ethiopias-extraordinary-rock-hewn-churches>

features of doors and windows found in the various rock churches of Tigray, Lasta, Farṭa (e.g. *Däbrä Täklähymanot*, a stone built church near Dabra Tabor (Phillipson 2009), and in Gayənt (e.g. the church of *Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm*). But the frames in Mäqét, Lalibela and Gayənt are different from Tigray; in which the frames in Tigray are *sandwich* type that timbers are used-entered in to the rock, but the formers have mainly integral rock carved features.



Fig.4.2 shapes of windows at the churches of Nazugn Maryam (I), Abäkäna Abbo (II) & Bétä Abba Libanos in Lalibela(III), note the pointed features at the top-mid part of the windows

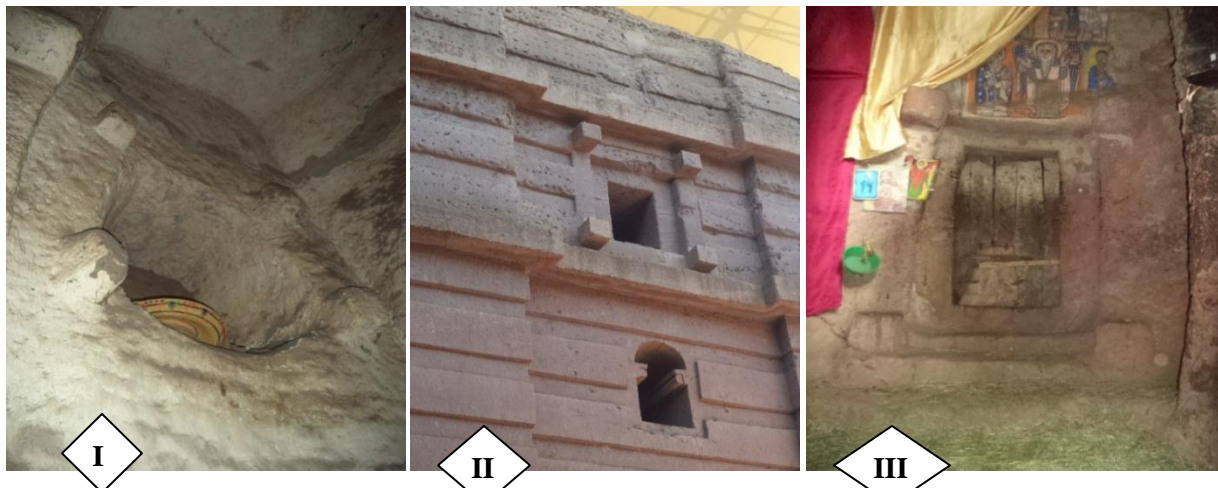


Fig. 4.3 Frames of windows in the churches of Gərar Maryam (I), Bétä Amanuel in Lalibela (II) & a door at Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm (III)

Some of the churches have friezes decorating the windows and doors of the churches. Windows connected by cross shaped features observe in the churches of Nazugn and *Däbrä Sina Maryam* just relatively identical with cross shape windows at the church of Bétä Maryam and Bétä

Mäsqäl. Many churches of the *Wäräda* have also indirectly opened and irregularly shaped windows; some of them are called *səqurät*. Despite these, regardless of the present modified windows and entrances, their original structures are unidentified in the churches of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm Washa Michael, Dasnja Mädhané Aläm, and Zəjjä Maryam.

The above points are about the frames of the rock hewn entrances and windows of the churches. But about the materials used to close entrances and windows are mainly recently prepared. The windows are either normally opened or temporarily closed using wood (mainly *yähabäsha şäd* or eucalyptus tree) or *lamera*. The entrances also have doors made of wood or *lamera*, most of them are prepared recently. The wooden (*yähäbäsha şäd*) doors in the churches of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm and Nazugn Maryam are old aged and very thick just the doors found in various churches of Tigray and Lasta.

D). Cross Engravings and Cross Shape Features

Some of the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda* have cross engravings in their internal parts, indicating the Christian affinities. These engraved crosses are hewn on the wall, roof and around domes and entrances. They are obviously engraved to indicate whether the builder is a Christian or the building is dedicated to a church.

Cross engravings observed on the wall of the churches of Bétä Hara Eiyäsus and around the dome and entrances of St. George at Washa Michael church (rich in cross engravings) are simply engraved. A single cross is also engraved on the dome of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, roof of Aqqat Marqos and Abäkäna Abbo. These all engraved crosses are not decorated. They are simply engraved with a simple design. But the engraved cross on the wall of *Abunä* Aron is distinct from other churches. It is delighted by flower adornment engravings and extends downward to the floor just resembling a processional cross style.

The cross engraved on the roof of the sanctuary of the Apostles in *Abunä* Aron (*see fig. 3.5, p.44*) is also very big; perhaps, similar with that of existed at Bétä Michael in Lalibela and Qirqos Wuqəro in Tigray. Adventitiously, the church of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm has two hewn opened cross shaped features very common in the churches of Lalibela such as at Bétä Maryam, Bétä Abba Libanos and at the western frontal facade of Bétä Golgotha (at the back of the Tomb of Adam).



I



II



III

Fig.4.4 (I) engraved processional cross in the Church of Abunä Aron; (II) a cross cut feature in the holly of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm and (III) on the southern external wall of Bétä Maryam in Lalibela

E). Paintings

Unlike the rock churches in and around Lalibela and Tigray, the rock churches found in Shädäho-Mäqét are less painted. But the existed paintings are not visited by researchers. The paintings in the church of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm (*cf. pp. 55-56*) are very significant. Probably, paintings on such an old aged umbrella are not found elsewhere in the country. Because, such type of umbrella with paintings is not utilized in the EOTC tradition except in this church, not found elsewhere.

Words were depicted around the paintings of the umbrella though most of the writings are removed. Some *Ge'ez* terms are readable, indicating the development of *Ge'ez* writing of the

time. The paintings on the western external facade of the holy of this church are pictures of saints observed mainly above their necks. It is because that most of the paintings are fading and most of them are not clearly seen by eye. What commonly observed on the paintings is that the circular styles of the pictures above their necks, that indicates they are pictures of saints.



Fig.4.5 (I) Wall painting; fig.4.5 (II) pictures depicted in side of the hand craft umbrella (both are found in the chanting place of Addis Amba Mūdhané Aläm)

Mention also should be made to the 17th century paintings (according to the local sources) in the churches of Zəjjä Maryam that are painted on cloth. The paintings include pictures of Jesus Christ and His Mother as well as other saints. These paintings are dominated by lined features using mainly of white, red and black colors.



Fig.4.6 Iconographic in the church of Zəjjä Maryam, St. Mary with Her Beloved Son

The paintings of Gərar Maryam are also painted on a similar cloth. Blue, red, black, white, yellow and green and other colors are used in the paintings of Gərar Maryam. Unlike Zəjjä Maryam, there are Gə'eəz terms describing the pictures found in Gərar Maryam. The rest rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda* have no any paintings.

F). Pillars

Most of the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda* have pillars with varying numbers. These columns are found within the internal parts of the churches and are identified as pillars with pierced arches⁶⁵ and non arch shaped as well as with supporting layers at the top of their part or without these features. The numbers of pillars (all are curved inside of the churches) and some of their features in the rock hewn churches of Mäqét *Wäräda* are recorded as follow in the table.

<i>No</i>	<i>Name of the churches</i>	<i>Number of pillars⁶⁶</i>	<i>Features</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>Abunä Aron</i>	<i>14</i>	Roughly hewn, rectangular with pierced aches, supported by rock girdles
<i>2</i>	<i>Däbrä Qättin Maryam</i>	<i>3</i>	Newly built, arch shaped, no girdles, rectangular
<i>3</i>	<i>Gəbşawit Abbo</i>	<i>1</i>	Arch shaped, supported by horizontal girdles, rectangular
<i>4</i>	<i>Quraqura Maryam</i>	<i>2</i>	Rectangular, not arch shaped, no horizontal girdles
<i>5</i>	<i>Abäkäna Abbo</i>	<i>2</i>	Rectangular, not arch shaped, no girdles
<i>6</i>	<i>Nazugn Maryam</i>	<i>4</i>	Roughly built, no arch shaped, no supporting girdles, rectangular
<i>7</i>	<i>A'emad Šəllasé</i>	<i>7</i>	Newly and rudely hewed, no arch shaped, no supporting girdles,
<i>8</i>	<i>Washa Michael⁶⁷</i>	<i>12</i>	Arch shaped, supported by rock girdles, very short, round
<i>9</i>	<i>Dasnja Mädhané Aläm</i>	<i>5</i>	Arch shaped, supported by girdles, smoothly hewed
<i>10</i>	<i>Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm</i>	<i>4</i>	Smartly hewed, arch shaped, no horizontal girdles, rectangular
<i>11</i>	<i>Tämbäqot Mädhané Aläm</i>	<i>5</i>	Roughly hewed, supported by leveled girdles, arch shaped
<i>12</i>	<i>Aqqat Marqos</i>	<i>9</i>	Poorly arch shaped, no girdles, rudely hewed
<i>13</i>	<i>Zəjjä Maryam</i>	<i>4</i>	Smoothly hewed, arch shaped, supported by girdles
<i>14</i>	<i>Gərar Maryam</i>	<i>3</i>	Smartly built, arch shaped, supported by girdles, rectangular
<i>15</i>	<i>Däbrä Sina Maryam</i>	<i>6</i>	Smartly hewn, arch shaped, supported by girdles
<i>16</i>	<i>Dufti Mädhané Aläm</i>	<i>3</i>	Rectangular, no girdles, arch shaped, smoothly hewed
<i>17</i>	<i>Yädoga Abbo</i>	<i>3</i>	Not arch shaped, no horizontal girdles

Table 4.2 Numbers of columns and some of their features in churches of Mäqét (Source: Own Survey)

⁶⁵ The arch shaped features connecting a pillar with another (just forming a bracket), the roof and the wall, formed the shape of Aksumite Stele.

⁶⁶ The broken columns in the churches of Tämbäqot, Gərar, Gəbşawit & Dasnja are not included. All of the pillars in the cave churches of Dufti Gabriel, Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus and St. George at Washa Michael might collapse.

⁶⁷ The pilasters found in the sanctuary of St. George of Washa Michael are indicators that arch shaped pillars might be existed.

Note that the manner of pierced arches, rectangularity, and the horizontal girdles curved are not identical in all of the churches. The columns in the church of Aqqat Marqos and Dufti Mädhané Aläm are poorly arch shapely connected. The pillars with rock girdles are better arch shaped, just to resemble the shapes of the Aksumite Stele. Most of the pillars have arches in their four directions to connect each other, with pilasters or to form arcades that projected the roof. But the arches in Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm and Dufti Mädhané Aläm churches are two sided.

The girdles resemble different designs, two girdles of columns in the church of Gərar Maryam; cooperated girdles in the church of Gəbşawit Abbo; and three leveled girdles in Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm and *Däbrä* Sina Maryam. Most of the pilasters of the churches have a rectangular feature but some columns in Aqqat Marqos and Yädoga Abbo are not much enough to be rectangular or round. Moreover, only one pillar in the church of *Däbrä* Sina Maryam is decorated by two engraved symbols, but no meanings can be understand, simply they indicated the *Ge'ez* letters of 'ጠ' and 'መ' having the ancient style of writing.

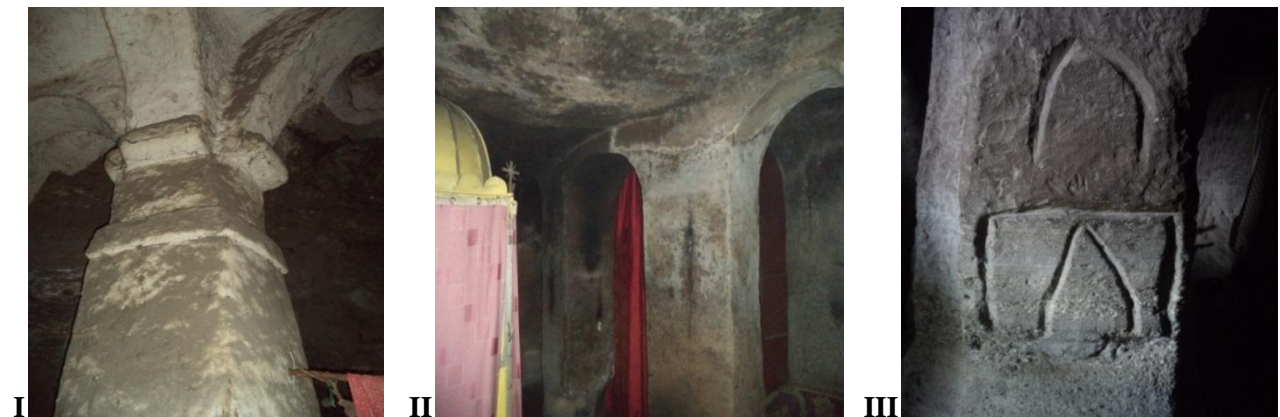


Fig.4.7 types of pillars in the churches of Gərar Maryam (I); Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm (II); & a decorated column in the church of *Däbrä* Sina Maryam(III)

The pillars that have a pierced arches and horizontal edges, exhibiting the shape of Aksumite Stele, with some variations, are very common in many rock hewn churches of Tigray, Lalibela, Gayənt and Wadla(but there are a uniquely hewn columns in the church of Yäçira Mädhané Aläm, which have multiple sides). It is stated that the actual pierced arches in the church of *Abunä* Aron resemble the features of Bəlbala Giyorgis in Lasta (Wright 1957), indicating the

continuity of the tradition. These arch shaped structures, as features of Christianity of Aksum is evidenced in the 4th century A.D.⁶⁸

G). Domes

Domes are widely existed features in the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda*. Ten of the rock churches have one and above domes in their naves. Most of the domes are similarly circular. A dome in Gəbşawit Abbo has an elongated rectangular feature and it bears white and black colors. But in the rectangular domed sanctuary of Quraqura Maryam and Grar Maryam, there is a circular dome in the middle part. The domes in the churches of Zəjjä Maryam and Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus are painted by different colors, of which the red and green colors are clearly identified.

The domes in the churches of Washa Michael, which are surrounded by the arcades, and Quraqura Maryam are doubled. A dome at Gərar Maryam, which has a feature, *qäranyo mäsqäl*, is similar to that of existed at Mässäna Mädhané Aläm in Gaynt. Except the church of *Abunä Aron*, the establishments of other churches of the *Wäräda* extended to the 4th century. Hence, the dome at the church of *Abunä Aron* of the 14th century is circular, similar with other domes, which could be that the builders may observed this tradition from other churches of the *Wäräda*, since they are nearest to *Dabrä Darét*.



Fig.4.8 different types of domes (above) in the churches of Geb sawit Abbo(I); Gərar Maryam (II); (below) Washa Michael(III) & Quraqura Maryam (IV)

⁶⁸ Prof. David Phillipson (email [communication](#))



The churches of Mässäna Mädhané Aläm and *Wudmaw* Giyorgis have different domes in which some of them are similar with domes of churches in Mäqét. A circular dome in the church of Mässäna Mädhané Aläm has a specific carved feature, *amdä wärq* (pillar of gold), in its mid part which is similar to that of existed in the sanctuary of Nazugn Maryam, both are above the rock hewn *mänbär*.

In the tradition of EOTC, domes are curved in the easternmost part of the church, parallel to the throne in the sanctuary (Buxton 1947). It is right, however, that the domes in the churches of Mäqét are hewn in the roof of the sanctuary. Uncommonly, the dome in the church of Aqqat Marqos is placed in the westernmost of the church.

These domes are basically characterizing features of the churches of Maqet. Infact, this feature are evidenced in different churches of the country. It is presented in some churches of Lasta area, for example, at Bəlbala Qirqos and Immäkina Mädhané Aläm(Natnael 2012) and in the churches of Abrha wä Aşibha and Maryam *Däbrä Şəyon* in Tigray. In fact, wooden framed domes are found in *Dabrä Damo*, *Yimrhannä Kərstos* and *Dabrä Täklähymanot Bétälhém* (Phillipson 2009).

The tradition of dome in the sanctuary of the churches might be related with the early Eastern Christian cultures. Dome in the tradition of Christianity, symbolizes the heavenly Jerusalem, that is why it is always curved in the most inner part of churches. This tradition has become the distinguishing feature of Byzantine architecture in the 4th century, during the reign of Constantine. At this time, Constantinople had become the major center of Eastern Christianity and its architectural center. Egypt, Syria and Asia Minor were under this influence during this time (Stephenson 2005). It was at this time that Ethiopia had a great relationship with these

centers of Christianity (Taddesse 1972). As a result, this tradition might be introduced by Abuna Muse. But, Phillipson informed me that in the early Axumite centuries, domes are not still evidenced, but in the very late first millenium AD.⁶⁹ Hence, the evidences of domes in Maqet may sketches an attention of researchers in the area.

H). Mänbär (Throne)

Mänbär in the tradition of EOTC is not seen separately with the Ark of the Covenant in which the *mänbär* is used as the rest for the *tabot* (Heldman 1992). *Mänbär* could be prepared from different materials based on different conditions; it may be of rock, wood, metal, or other minerals. In a unique quantified tradition, many rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäräda have rock hewn *mänabärt*(plural-thrones) excavated from the parent rock in their sanctuaries. This type of *mänbär* is immovable since it is not detached from the bed rock with different extent. Of the rock churches in the *wäräda*, seven of them have rock hewn thrones, as recorded in the table below.

No	Name of the Churches	Number of Thrones
1	Nazugn Maryam	1
2	Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus	1
3	Washa Michael (St. George)	1
4	Tämbäqot Mädhané Aläm	3
5	Zöjjä Maryam	1
6	Däbrä Sina Maryam	1
7	Grar Maryam	2
8	Gəbşawit Abb	1
9	Dufti Mädhané Aläm	1
	Total	12

Table 4.3 Rock hewn thrones in the churches of Mäqét Wäräda (Source: Own Survey)

The rock thrones in these churches are rectangular in shape with different sizes. All of them are rectangular. Some of them are thrones with different hewed parts in the churches of Dufti Mädhané Aläm, Bétä Hara Eiyyäsus and Washa Michael.

Positively, the rock hewn *mänbär* is one of the most important traditions of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäräda. These features also existed in the rock churches found in Wadla, Dawnt, Gayönt and Farṭa districts. It is mentioned that there are five stone thrones in the rock hewn monolithic church of Wuqəro Mädhané Aläm in Farṭa Wäräda (Solomon 2011). I have

⁶⁹ David Phillipson (email communication)

observed rectangular thrones in Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm and *Wudmaw Giyorgis*. Some thrones of these churches have different parts similar to thrones found in the churches of Mäqét.

Rock hewn thrones are very rarely observed in the rock hewn churches of Lalibela and Tigray, such as in the church of Maryam Wuqero (Phillipson 2009). The excavation of thrones has decreased to the later periods when movable thrones started to be used widely. This probably implies that the rock hewn churches of Mäqét are the earliest than others in the country.



Fig 4.9 Rock hewn thrones in the churches of Gərar Maryam (I); Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm(II); Mäsänna Mädhané Aläm (III); & Wudmaw Giyorgis(IV) (photos⁷⁰)

I). Səqurät

Səqurät is one of the other unique features of the churches of Mäqét. Unlike windows, they are curved near or on the roof of the churches. Their shapes are mainly irregular and are used directly or indirectly for the entrance of light. The churches such as Aqqat Marqos, A'emad Šəllasé, Tāmbäqot Mädhané Aläm, Quraqura Maryam and Gəbşawit Abbo have relatively different opened holes mainly along and around their sanctuary.

The apex of *səqurät* culture is found in the church of *Abunä Aron*. Unlike others, the *səqurät* in the church of *Abunä Aron*, proper on the roof of the nave, draws an attention in the situation that there is no water droplet in side of the church through that space. It was first mentioned by Stephen Wright (1957) who expressed his feelings that this prodigy had recounted him on the spot. It may create a great attention among rock church researchers in the future. The detail of this *səqurät* is delivered at the beginning of this chapter (*cf. Abunä Aron, pp. 29-30*).

J). Cemetery:- Burial places are also features of the churches which need consideration in relation to the cave churches. These sites will have an archaeological function for some reasons-

⁷⁰These thrones were accessible to take a picture while I was in field work.

that the sites will furnish archaeological evidences through detail studies to assess the socio-cultural, the economic and political statuses of the previous society of the *Wäräda*. The most nearest burials indicated the upper echelons of the society and the remote burials are those of who had little social role in the society. It is also a tradition in the churches of Ethiopia that the bones of saints rested within or around the churches believing that the bones are sacred. Sometimes, piece of these bones may be used by the believers to cure diseases. It is evidenced in different rock hewn churches of Ethiopia.

Dominantly, most of the churches of Mäqét consisted bones of saints in their internal parts, within small caves or undergrounds or collected in wooden boxes. The chanting place of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm is dominated by burial sites, buried under the floor and rested within big wooden boxes along the *Bétälhém*. Most of the other churches have constituted bones either buried within a hole or rested in a prepared wooden box.



Fig.4.10 (I) wooden boxes of fossils in Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm; fig.4.10 (II) fossils buried under the floor of Washa Michael church

Moreover, it is common mainly in the country side that burial sites could not be outside of the churches' yard. One can observe many burial places around the churches. The oldest burial sites may be devastated in order to bury newly dead bodies as a result of shortage of cemetery in the churches. The burial sites nearest to the churches are always either the saints or in the recent thought, the wealthiest and those of who served a lot in the churches.

Regardless of the recently burial sites, the oldest, at least before 50 years, were buried within underground, having a sign of plants and stone piled features. The bones inside of the churches are of the saints. No tomb or statue of burial site is found in the churches. The burial site in the churches have meaning that is the dead bodies are always buried west-east direction; the head of

the dead body must be to the west. This is related with the thought of Christianity that the dead bodies alive and stand from west to east in the *Last Judgment Day*.

K. Technological Traditions

There are some issues but unique and significant -the local technological aids and application used and found in the churches. The foundation of a *gudəb*, an axe, a small digging aid used for the excavation in the church of *Abunä Aron* is seen distinctly (*see fig.3.6, p.32*). The function of this *gudəb* is now changed; it is serving for curing purpose. Though such excavating material is not found in other churches of Mäqét, the signs observed on the roof and wall of the churches assured the use of similar local excavating material. Axe has an intertwined cultural relation with the people of the *Wäräda*.

The other that demand attention in the *Wäräda* is the local hand craft technology. The foundation of an umbrella, a locally hand craft production in Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, is a unique example. It is directly related with the existing hand craft production of the people of the *Wäräda*. The skill used to prepare this umbrella is similar with the locally produced carpet, *dawujja*, that has interesting purposes among the people of the *Wäräda*. It serves either to spread out grains to drying or sometimes for sleeping.

The umbrella is an accentuated output of this hand craft technology existing since early times in the area. This umbrella is not movable, hanging on the roof, giving service only at a permanent place in the chanting place of the church. One can question that what type of umbrella might be used for outside church service mainly during festivities. Though no evidences found, a similar product of movable umbrella might be used at this church.

4.4 Chronology and Continuity of the Tradition

I believe that the above discussions have come across with significant points helping to assess the issues of the chronology and continuity of the rock hewn church tradition of Ethiopia. The date, origin and continuity of the rock church tradition are related issues. For the clarity state of the time and continuity of the rock churches of Ethiopia, the challenging issue is their chronological establishment. To examine these issues, it needs to look the architectural features; the skills and technologies used; the local written and oral sources; and archaeological findings.

Phillipson (2009) indicates the chronology of rock hewn churches of Ethiopia is based on local and archeological sources, though the later one provided little information. The dating in the area of Tigray is suggested to be starting from the 6th (the original built up church of Aksum Şəyon Church is said to be built in the 4th century) to the 14th century A.D. Phillipson also suggested the churches of Lalibela to be developed beginning from the decline of the Aksumite Empire through five stages, which indicates as the stages increases the Christianity affinity of the churches also increase). The local accounts trace the rock hewn churches in Lasta *Wäräda* back to the 6th century (Natnael 2012).

But, based on local written and oral sources, the dating of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét might be trace back to the 4th century A.D and it reaches to 14th century A.D. Except the churches of *Abunä Aron*, all of the churches are believed to have been carved in the 4th century A.D (note that the local accounts in the rock hewn churches of Lasta and Tigray trace back to the 6th century A.D). But it is difficult to take the local sources reliable since there is not historical statements of *Abunä Musé* in the bishop history of Ethiopia. At the same time, it is difficult to suggest relative dating of these churches except the locally based dating.

Here, the traditionally based dating of these churches may drives rock hewn church researches to give attention to these groups of churches in Mäqét. I note that these traditional accounts are the major sources for the dating of the churches until archaeological sources furnish for a detail study in the future.

The churches of Mäqét seem to be built in one generation. In fact, there is one millennium gap between the churches of Aron and others in which the continuity might be interrupted by conflicts. Or the number of the rock hewn churches found in the *Wäräda* might be assumed to be enough for worshipping centers and the later rock hewn church hewer might moved to other areas.

The less architectural features and Christian affinities observed in the rock churches of Mäqét also may indicate that they might be carved earlier than other rock churches in the country. Because most of the rock churches in Tigray and Lasta are more architected and resemble Christian affinities. It is stated that the Christian affinities of the rock hewn churches increases in the churches built in recent times (Phillipson 2009).

The existed architectures of the churches, such as the horizontal layers and vertical buttresses, might be a pre-existing tradition for latter churches of the country. The frames of windows and the horizontal projections also could be the base for the brand rock hewn churches development of the later times. For example, the pointed features on the windows of Mäqét are imitated on the frames of windows at Bétä Abba Libanos, in Lalibela. The engineering skill used at Nazugn Maryam church, immediately become a good discussion for this issue. The draining system elucidates that the church could be a pre existing system for the refined works resemble at Bétä Giyorgis in Lalibela.

The earliness of the churches may be supported by the concentrated location of these large numbers of rock hewn churches in Mäqét. Because, this concentration may raises question why they built in this area. The presence of many numbers of rock hewn thrones may also indicate the earliness of the churches. But, a great hope is given for future studies since it is hard to accept the introduction of Christianity in this area in the fourth century A.D. At this level, a hint is suggested based on local sources.

The other most important scenario is about the origin and continuity tradition of rock hewn churches of the country in which the argument is upon the issue of indigenously developed and introduced elements. Though the tradition is more developed based on the internal experiences, positively, the introduced and adapted elements in the tradition are not denied, if one considers the contacts of Ethiopia with the Early Christian World in different times.

The 4th century A.D is a turning point in the history of Ethiopia in which Christianity has been declared as a state religion. This time was critical both for secular and religious contacts of Ethiopia with the Eastern Christian World, mainly with Byzantine Christians. The basilica style, one of the basic features of the Byzantine architecture, is a structure probably adapted from the tradition of Eastern Christianity. It is common everywhere in Christian churches (Finneran 2007; Phillipson 2009). But this is highly suspicious because any constructor may think to widen and planned a rectangular nave capable to accessed by believers, since the monument is assumed to be used for worshipping center accessed by all believers as much as possible.

The dome of churches also might be adapted in to the tradition of rock hewn church of Ethiopia (*cf. pp. 86*). The coming of *Abunä Musé* and other Saints might have adapted these styles in to

the rock hewn church tradition of the country. This may be evidenced based on the local written sources and oral traditions which state the dating of the churches of the *Wäräda* in the 4th century A.D, which is parallel to the architectural apogee of the Byzantine Period. But the tradition of domes within the thatched masonry household homes of Mäqét is common, which is locally called *gäbäta*, mostly made of wood. This skill might be developed in to the rock hewn church traditions of the area.

Despite that, the tradition and origin of rock hewn church in Ethiopia is stated to be the production of the internal based developments (Jager & Pearce 1974). The rock hewn churches of Mäqét have a also basement of internal experience. Firstly, the tradition of hewing of caves from a rock is not a recent phenomenon, which trace back to the time before the introduction of Christianity. Caves were used as residency and burial sites. Hermits and monks in Ethiopia also had used isolated small caves for praying, which developed in to big chapels, following the expansion of Christianity. This pre existing tradition could be the base for the hewing the rock hewn churches of the area.

Secondly, the different architectural applications such as the frames of doors and windows, internal arrangements-in relation to the services of EOTC and arch shaped features of pillars and horizontal and vertical layers are evidences supporting the influence of Axumite tradition.

Thirdly, the absence of written engravings is a common tradition in the rock hewn churches of Ethiopia. No written engravings are found in the churches of Mäqét. The builders had no hobbies to put written words indicating their names and the time when they hewed the church. This is because that it is common in the activities of religious fathers of EOTC probably to be far from cajolery. But this created a gap that makes the tradition of the country argumentative among many researchers.

Fourthly, the skills and technological materials used are still working in the culture of the people of Mäqét. The hewer used an axe- a local material used in the day to day activities of the people. It did not use other advanced or introduced excavating materials. There is no any foreign excavation aid discovered in any rock hewn churches of Ethiopia. This can be assured that, even currently, the building of rock hewn churches is using not advanced materials but a local axe.

The cave church of Wärq Washa Giyorgis, close to Çäçäho Mädhané Aläm, and the currently hewing rock hewn monuments near Gashäna are good examples. The former one is probably mentioned by Phillipson (2009) as it was hewing; now it is giving service. The newly hewing rock hewn monuments near Gashäna are very interesting conducting in a way showing the skill of Ethiopians as existing evidence to challenge the foreign based stubborn assumptions. The excavation of these buildings from an existed single rock is started in 2011 by *Märgéta Gäbrä Mäsqäl Täsämma* (the pictures inserted below are taken on 19 January 2014).



Fig.4.11 (I) & (II) the unfinished hewing rock hewn monuments near Gashäna, along the way to Lalibela

Fifthly, the foundation of many numbers of rock hewn thrones in the churches of the *Wäräda*, on one hand, indicated the earliness of the churches, and on the other hand, it makes the tradition very an indigenous. Because it is only in Ethiopia that *tabot* become a center of worshipping in the Christian World. That is why *mänbär* is prepared in the churches. Finally, the foundation of a locally hand craft umbrella magnifies the internal development of the tradition, a treasure which is not yet found anywhere. The written words on the umbrella, which are clearly *Ge'ez* terms, accredited the indigenous tradition of the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda*.

In general, the locally based dating (keeping the doubt on the spot), the poor workmanship, the poorly architectural skills and the existed architectures (both indigenous and adapted traditions) of the rock hewn churches may indication of the early construction of these churches than from other rock churches in the country and they carved mainly based on the existing indigenous tradition which could be a base for the later rock hewn church tradition of the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This study has introduced the rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäradä. The churches are found in the inaccessible areas of the Wäradä. The tradition of these churches is cave oriented. One rock hewn monolithic church, Nazugn Maryam, is recorded and no built up churches are found. The manner of the excavation determines this tradition to be cave oriented that might be determined by geological factors and the setting of the rocks.

The rock hewn churches of Mäqét have unique and common architectures. Some of them also have distinct cultural heritages. The *səqurät* of Abunä Aron and the monolithic nave within a cave in Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm are unique features of the churches in the Wäradä and in the country, in general. Thanks to the local hand craft technology, the umbrella which temporarily hanged in the church of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, is significantly a unique property of the church, which is delighted by its internal architectural manifestations.

The architectural projections and engineering skills might be pre existed context for the excavation of later refined rock hewn monolithic churches of Ethiopia. The corner post integral projections and the pointed features at the top part of windows and the buttresses, pilasters and horizontal layers are clear examples to compare the architectural skills of the Wäradä with other churches mainly in different parts of northern Ethiopia.

The dating of the churches is questionable. No archaeological and historical sources found to discuss their chronology. The traditional sources traced the dating of the churches to the 4th century A.D., in which most of them are believed to have been built by Abunä Musé who is not known in the bishop history of Ethiopia. This issue demands detail archaeological and historical studies.

The rock hewn church tradition of Mäqét is dominated by internally developed traditions than introduced elements. The arch shaped features of the columns, the frames of windows and doors, the architectural features on the walls and the different small caves/chapels around the churches

are Aksumite based. The foundation of many water conservation pools and the rock hewn thrones in many churches are indications of the inside developments. The absence of engraved writings in the churches also supported this issue. The basilica projection of the naves and the dome shaped structures of the rock hewn churches are narrowly suspected to be adapted from the early Byzantine Christian traditions.

The continuity of the rock hewn churches' tradition is still experiencing in and around the *Wäräda*. The skill of excavating of churches from a living rock is performed in the nearby of Gashäna and *Dabra Zäbit*, just indicating that the tradition is accustomed by many persons in the *Wäräda*, by using local excavating aids, which is a living tradition. This may challenge researchers who counted the tradition to be foreign based.

The heritage management and conservation aspect of the churches is challenged by the existing natural and anthropogenic problems. High rain fall and drying employed a great impact which weaken the churches helped by the nature of the rocks. Animals and roots of plants are the other causes of deterioration of the churches. Anthropogenic related problems of the churches have a profound impact on the churches and the treasures.

The conservation aspect of the churches has different problems. The absence of conservation, the threat of previous conservation activity that has stepped to another destruction and the agglomeration of a new history of the rock hewn churches. The problem of Nazugn Maryam church is exacerbated by the previous local conservation activities that demand an immediate call for conservators and responsible decision makers. Little awareness of the societies; the absence of public & privates sectors and the existing illicit trafficking activities are also the tangible challenges of treasures of the churches. In fact, all these problems were raised and discussed deeply in this paper. But future researches will compensate the draw backs.

The tangible and intangible cultural heritages and the natural environmental setting of the churches are the major opportunities for tourism development through promotional activities of the *Wäräda* which should be given attention in the future study. These heritages have not only religious meanings but also significant socio-cultural and economic manifestations of the people of the *Wäräda*. The CBT activity of Mäqét is not linked with these churches, probably due to

lack of facilities and weakness of the project that lead the CBT. Continuous assessments and researches needs to improve the activity.

Moreover, this study has indicated the mandatory of taking professional and decisional interventions at least to decrease the challenges of the churches. It also indicates the opportunities for other archaeological investigations in and around the churches particularly in the vicinity of Tāmbäqot Mādhané Alām and Nazugn Maryam and other churches reestablished sometimes ago. The mandatory of urgent research activities in the neighboring districts of Wadla, Dawnt and Gayənt is clued under this study.

5.2 Recommendation

I expect that this study has come across with a pioneering discussion of the rock hewn churches of Mäqét Wäräda. But it is not the end of the game, which needs a continuous research to assess the overall tradition these churches, both in the academic arena and tourism development of the country. Hence, I have recommended the following core points on the spot.

- ✓ A detail research of each church will come across with a deep understanding of the architectural and engineering skills of the churches for the hot discussion of the tradition in Mäqét and in the country, in general.
- ✓ The dating issue of the churches of the Wäräda is based on oral traditions and written hagiographies. This does not convince the dating and future researches are expected to provide archaeological evidences, which may significant to study collapsed and recently revealed rock hewn churches of the Wäräda.
- ✓ The churches should be registered as parts of national heritage. The role of the Cultural and Tourism Office of Amhara Regional State is indispensable in this regard, and the activities of other cultural and tourism offices at different level are necessary. Descriptions of the churches should be recorded at least by the Wäräda's Culture and Tourism Office.
- ✓ The parish of the Wäräda has responsibility to attend and promote these churches than passing its time with routine activities, to sustain the activities of the churches.
- ✓ Both Public and Private sectors in relation to culture and tourism should take active participation in the documentation, conservation and promotion of these churches.
- ✓ The previous conservation activities of the churches need a detail assessment so as to assure the longer existence of the churches as soon as possible. Unless this is done, many churches may collapse in the nearest future. In particular emphasis, for its current situation, the rock hewn monolithic church of Nazugn Maryam needs an urgent assessment to have mercy it from collapsing as a result of anthropogenic and natural factors. Iron sheltering of the church is advisable decrease the impact of high rainfall and sunlight.
- ✓ The conservation activity of the churches also needs the involvement of both professional conservators and the host communities.

- ✓ Preliminary assessments and records should be activated before any conservation activity of the churches and periodical visit and report is needed. Previous conservation activities have left their obstacle to assess their early time situations and future decisions.
- ✓ It needs detail inventory of the tangible and intangible heritages of the churches. Continuous recording and conservation is indispensable.
- ✓ It is advisable to establish a common rural museum of the churches and other cultural heritages which may be found in the *Wäräda*, on one way to safely keep the heritages and, on the other way, to develop tourism in the area.
- ✓ The expansion of illicit trafficking in the area is one of the major threats of the churches. Awareness creation for the host communities is expected from heritage manager officials and others who duly worked on such cultural values.
- ✓ The churches also have to publicize using Medias and other internet means in relation to social, cultural and economic significances.
- ✓ There are no standardized restaurants and hotels in the *Wäräda*. Investments in this area shall be encouraged to promote tourism.
- ✓ The CBT needs reevaluation and continuous assessment with the perspective of rural village tourism in the area and it should be connected with these rock hewn churches. Its activity should be oriented to solve some parts of the local people's economic and social problems. For this matter, the participation of females should be increase and the local guides need different trainings to carry their activity carefully.
- ✓ The major hindrance that disconnects the churches with the CBT activity of the area is lack of infrastructure and other necessities in the area. Above all, the access of road should be given priority to manage the churches.
- ✓ The local manuscripts particularly, *Gädlä Abunä Musé* and *Abunä Aron* need a critical investigation and they should be published which will much support future studies on the rock hewn churches of the *Wäräda* and other areas.

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Gädlä Abunä Aron (recently written parchment available in the church of *Abunä Aron*)

Gädlä Abunä Musé (a recently copied parchment available in the church of Addis Amba Mädhané Aläm, which is copied from Yäçira Mädhané Aläm Church in Wadla *Wäräda*, which is also copied from Yädbba Maryam in Dawnt that is said to be the original manuscript of *Gädlä Abunä Musé*)

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List of Informants

No	Name	Sex	Age	Date of Interview	Place of Interview	Remarks
1	<i>Qés Adam Fäntayä</i>	M	60	16/9/2013	Bétä Hara	He is treasury's keeper and he lives in the church for many years.
2	<i>Abbohay Addisu Yaläw</i>	M	60	29/9/2013	Gərar Maryam	He is keeper of the church's treasure lives in the church for many years.
3	<i>Qés Ambaw Addissé</i>	M	62	21/9/2013	Aqqat	He is servant in Aqqat Abbo and he participated when the church has reestablished
4	<i>Qés Ambayä kassé</i>	M	61	3/10/2013	Quraqura	He is the treasury's keeper and he lived many years in the church.
5	<i>Qés Alämnäw Mäkönnän</i>	M	60	2/10/2013	Gəbşawit	He lives in the area for many years and he knows the history of the church.
6	<i>Märgéta Ambayä Sətotaw</i>	M	80	6/10/2013	Abäkäna	He born and lives in the area & he has served the church for many years
7	<i>Deacon Asäffa Däsalägn</i>	M	25	24/9/2013	Yädoga Abbo	He is served in the church
8	<i>Qés Bitäw Wäldé</i>	M	50	9/9/2013	<i>Dabrä Qättin</i>	He is the leader of the church. He born and lives in the area for many years
9	<i>Qés Dämssé Kidé</i>		89	26/9/2013	Dufti	He stayed in church service for more than 70 years and he has lived in the cave of Dufti Gabriel with his families before the cave has turned in to a church.
10	<i>Abba Därbäw Räta</i>	M	73	11/10/2013	Washa Michael	Leader of the church and he participated when the church has been cleaned in 1959.
11	<i>Qés Däsalägn Sättargé</i>		35	24/9/2013	Yädoga	He is leader of the church & knows the church's history.
12	<i>Qés Däsalägn Adbaru</i>	M	45	6/9/2013	Ae'mad	He is leader of the church & he has knowledge of the church.
13	<i>Qés Dästaw Şagayä</i>	M	65	5/9/2013	Nazugn	He lives in the area and serve the church for many years
14	<i>Ato Dubé Wädaynäw</i>	M	58	29/9/2013	Gərar Maryam	He is a local militia and he participated to save church's properties when the treasure's house was burning
15	<i>Mäzämmr Eyyasu Taddässä</i>	M	64	20/10/2013	Dasnja	He is the canter of the church and lives in the area for many years.
16	<i>Qés Fasikaw Wärqu</i>	M	40	"	"	He is leader of the church & has knowledge of the church.
17	<i>Abba Gäbrä Egzi'abhér Wäldätklé</i>	M	76	11/9/2013	<i>Abunä Aron</i>	He is head of the monastery and he has deep knowledge about the church.

A survey of Rock Hewn Churches in Mäqét Wäräda

18	<i>Märgéta Gétachäw Abäbä</i>	M	55	6/9/2013	A'emad	He has knowledge of the church.
19	<i>Qés Gädam Kasé</i>	M	56	29/9/2013	Gərar Maryam	He is servant in the church & he has knowledge of the church.
20	<i>Liqä Kahnat Gälaw Dubalä</i>	M	77	19/9/2013	Tämbäqot	He leads priesthood of the <i>Wäräda</i> for more than 25 years and he knows how the church is discovered.
21	<i>W/ro Gəmbé Mäkönnän</i>	F	68	21/9/2013	Aqqat	She was born in the area & she remembers the cave before it becomes a church. She had local political participation during Hailä Şöllasé II in the 1960s.
22	<i>Abba Hailä Gabriel</i>	M	30	3/9/2013	Addis Amba	<i>Qésä gäbüz</i> /manager of church's property and service and he knows the history of the church.
23	<i>Qés Mäbré Wärräta</i>	M	72	5/9/2013	Nazugn	He served the church and he lives many years in the area
24	<i>Qés Mängəst Adal</i>	M	45	16/9/2013	Bétä Hara	He is leader of the church & has knowledge of the church.
25	<i>Wana Sajin Mäzgäb Asäffé</i>	M	45	22/10/2013	Fəlaqit	He is an officer of <i>Izgəbit Gəmjä Bét</i> Service and he has knowhow about the illicit trafficking activity in Mäqét.
26	<i>Abba Matäbé Alamrräw</i>	M	87	27/9/2013	Dufti	He lived in the area for long years and had served in the church.
27	<i>Qés Maräg Fäntayä</i>	M	32	23/9/2013	Zəjjä Maryam	He is leader of the church & knows the church's history.
28	<i>Abba Mogäsé Məsgé</i>	M	55	19/9/2013	Tämbäqot	He is keeper of the church's treasure and he was the victim by the band of thieves
29	<i>Ato Mogäs Täkaləgn</i>	M	45	23/9/2013	Zəjjä Maryam	He is a farmer & he has know how about the history of the church.
30	<i>Qés Mətku Şagayä</i>	M	61	5/9/2013	Nazugn	He is leader of the church & lives in the area many years.
31	<i>Qés Mulu Ayänäw</i>	M	53	19/9/2013	Tämbäqot	He is a servant and has knowledge of the church.
32	<i>Qés Sättägn Hailu</i>	M	40	6/10/2013	Abäkäna	Leader of the church and he has knowledge of the church.
33	<i>Ato Shifäraw käfyaläw</i>	M	32	22/10/2013	Fəlaqit	He is working in the Cultural and Tourism Office of the <i>Wäräda</i> .
34	<i>Qés Tadé Wanna</i>	M	46	26/9/2013	Dufti	He is keeper of treasure & he has knowledge of the church.
35	<i>Qés Taddässä Abrham</i>	M	30	2/10/2013	Gəbşawit	He is the keeper of the church and he has knowledge about the church.
36	<i>Deacon Taddässä Wäday</i>	M	24	9/9/2013	Dabra Qettin	He is servant in the church and he has knowledge about the church.
37	<i>Abba Zéna Täka</i>	M	40	3/9/2013	Addis Amba	He is head of the church & has knowledge of the church.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Formats and Questions

I. Profiles of Interviewee

A. Name _____

B. Age _____

C. Sex _____

D. Social position _____

E. Place of interview _____

F. Date of interview _____

II. Interview Questions

1. When was the church built?
2. Who built the church?
3. Was there any natural and anthropogenic related catastrophe in the church that had interrupted its liturgical activities?
4. When did the previous conservation activities started in the Church?
5. Who did the conservation activity of the church?
6. Was the church visited by tourists and researchers?

Appendix II Lists of Rock Hewn Churches of Mäqét Wäradä

A survey of Rock Hewn Churches in Mäqät Wäräda

የወረዳው ቋሚ ቅርሶች / መስህብ ሀብቶች / የምስረታ ዘመን አመሰራረትና ያላቸውን ርቀት የሚያሳይ ስንጠረኻ

ተቁ	መጠሪያ ስም	የሚገኝበት ቀበሌ	የምስረታ ዘመን	ቅርሱ ሁኔታ		የቅርሶች ርቀት በኪ/ሜ		
				ሰው-ሰራሽ	ተፈጥሯዊ	ከዞን ከተማ	ከወረዳ ከተማ	ከዋና መስመር
1	ቤተሀራ ኢየሱስ	01	1658	x				
2	ደብረ ቀጢን ቅድስት ማሪያም	04	1382	x		150	5	5
3	ደብረ አሮን መንክራዊ ገዳም	04	1389	x		162	17	5
4	ገዳመ ገነት ናዙኝ ማሪያም	010	--	x		164	19	7
5	አማይጥ ቅድስት ስላሴ	010	1500	x		175	30	10
6	ዋሻ ሚካኤል	013	230	x		170	25	5
7	ዳስጃ ማሪያም	015	1984	x		145	8	8
8	አዲስ አምባ ደ/መድሀኒዓለም	019	343	x		145	10	10
9	ምስካቤ ቅዱሳን አቃት ማርቆስ	022	1659	x		137	8	5
10	ደብረ ጽባህ ጠ/መድሀኒዓለም	022	1659	x		126	29	5
11	ደብረ ሲና ቅድስት ማሪያም	025	228	x		126	29	5
12	የዶጋ አቡነ ገ/መንፈስ ቅዱስ	025		x		137	52	10
13	ደ/ጎለጎታ ዝጆ ቅድስት ማሪያም	028	1659	x		113	42	5
14	ርዕሰ አድባራት አምላላ ክርስቶስ መድሀኒዓለም	029	1650	x		105	44	4
15	ግብጻዊት አቡነ ገ/መንፈስ ቅዱስ	033	570	x		90	65	5
16	መካነ ሀይወት ጠደማች	033	1659	x		95	70	10
17	ቁራቁራ ቅድስት ማሪያም	033	1659	x		90	55	7
18	አበከና አቡነ ገ/መንፈስ ቅዱስ	039	1659	x		90	55	7
19	ግራር ቅድስት ማሪያም	043	325	x		102	43	15