

# The Forgotten Heritages of Mertule Maryam Monastery and Its Trail for Sustainable Tourism Development

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**Abstract:** Ethiopian monasteries and churches are home to substantial material culture, storing frontiers of knowledge from the sacred to the secular. Märtulä Maryam, located in the former Gojjam province of Mošša awraja particularly in Enäbsé Sar Meder wäräda, is the repository of a number of cultural heritages, with significant historical values. This paper investigates the forgotten incredible and priceless heritage and the 'traditional' cultural heritage management practices of the church. The paper focuses on practices of local and scientific cultural heritage conservation. Indeed, the paper also assess the potential of Märtulä Maryam Monastery to become tourist destination and to investigate many factors accounted or hindered the site to contribute for tourism development. To realize this objective, the researcher employed qualitative research method. To assess the forgotten monastery heritages, their indigenous knowledge in preserving the heritage, its potential for tourism and challenges of the monastery for tourism development, primary and secondary data were collected. To collect primary data, face to face personal interview and participant observation was conducted. In order to analyse the contents of documentary materials such as books, archives, newspapers and the contents of interviews and personal observation, the researcher has employed interpretive and descriptive analysis.

**Keywords:** History, Cultural Heritages, Indigenous knowledge, Tourism Development

## 1. Introduction

Heritage can be defined as everything that is inherited from the past such as structures, objects, images, ideas, sentiments (expression of fillings or ideas), and practices, which describes and witness the evolution of man and nature through centuries.<sup>1</sup> Heritage can be classified as natural and cultural. Cultural sites may include large-scale archaeological sites, sacred spaces, ancient monuments, and historic buildings and structures of different ages and sizes. Hence, Cultural sites serve an important role in communities today. They represent a connection to and continuity with the past while envisioning a cultural inheritance for future generations.<sup>2</sup>

Currently, Heritage influences the global environment through tourism in which Culture and tourism are strongly interdependent. Heritage tourism is a form of tourism that specifically targets the art, architecture, history, monuments, museums, theatres, religious heritage, social interaction, food habits, and lifestyle of people in a certain geographical region. According to Jamie and Eric, heritage tourism deals with traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories, people of the past, and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural and natural resources This is because it is culture that serves as one of the principal motivations for the movement of people. Hence, one of the biggest worldwide phenomena of the past four decades has been the increase of mass tourism. This has considerable effect on the number of people visiting heritage sites and the economies of the concerned bodies. Hence,

heritage as the major component of tourist attractions play an important role in diversifying the economy and in increasing the balance of payment.<sup>3</sup>

Märtulä Maryam monastery, the geographical limit of this study located in the former Gojjam province of Mošša awraja/ sub province/ particularly in Enäbsé Sar Meder wäräda bordered on the South by Enarj Enawuga, on the West by Gonša Sëso Enäsè and on the North and East by Abay River in which the river separates from south Gondor and south Wollo Zones. The Wäräda is approximately located between 10° 45'N and 37° 51'E in Gojjam province of North Western Ethiopia situated an altitude of 1300-3664m above Sea level with in a total area of 84739 Ha or 1065.32 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the highest peak in the wäräda is Abba Meniwos Mountain which shares 3, 664 m located in Yäqändaše qäbällä.<sup>3</sup> Märtulä Maryam is the capital of Enäbsé Sar Meder Wäräda that own Märtulä Maryam monastery with an altitude of 2645m above sea level located 191 km far from zonal capital Däbrä Markos, 180 km from regional capital Bahir Dar and 365 km from Addis Abeba.<sup>5</sup>

The presence of Märtulä Maryam monastery in Enäbsé Sar Meder wäräda plays a significant role for expansion of Christianity among the local people of the wäräda and people of Gojjam province in general. In fact, Christianity was officially received in Ethiopia in the fourth century

<sup>3</sup>Cited in Boniface, P. Managing Quality Cultural Tourism, London: 1995.

<sup>4</sup>Yä Enäbsé Sar Meder Wäräda, "yä mastaweqia şefet bét yä 2008 E.C amätawi report", (Märtulä Maryam, 2008 E.C.), p.7; and see also Edward Hein and Brigitte Kleidt, *Ethiopia- Christian Africa, Art, Church and Culture*, (Ratingen: Melina Verlag press, 1999), pp. 198- 202.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid; Yä Enäbsé Sar Meder Wäräda, "yä Geberena ena Gäşär lemat bureau, aşakalay yä wärädaw Gäşeta", (Märtulä Maryam, 2008 E.C.), pp. 9-21

<sup>1</sup>Blake, J. On Defining the Cultural Heritage, The International and Comparative Law Quarterly 49:2000; Bägaşaw Belay, *yä qerse amäzägagäb seltäna manual*, (Baher Dar: 1997), pp. 2-9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

during the Aksumite period, with the conversion of the monarchs. Then the Christian faith gradually came to spread to different parts of the country. However, there is no consensus among scholars regarding to the period when each Ethiopian region welcomed Christianity. Likewise, the dating of the entrance and expansion of Christianity in Gojjam province, and the foundation of Märtulä Maryam monastery is debatable. Hence, Sources attributed that there was Christianity and Christian culture since 4<sup>th</sup> c in the province of Gojjam. Consequently, sources attribute the foundation of Märtulä Maryam monastery to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD by the twin kings Abreha wä Ašebeha. Yet, king Amdä Šion's (r.1313-1344) military campaign as well as expansion to Agaw, Damot and Gojjam is taken as a land mark for the expansion of Christianization of Gojjam.<sup>6</sup>

Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church and Monasteries are comprised various historical and religious heritages which become a symbol of national pride of Ethiopia. Märtulä Maryam monastery is the one which is rich in cultural heritage and also the community of the monastery had passed a good habit of preparing, preserving and protecting their cultural heritages and transmitted from generation to generation.<sup>7</sup> Basically, the monastery habit of writing and preparation of parchment books is still performed in the town of Märtulä Maryam and nearby *qäbällés* like Enäbré. Indeed, the monastery was dully acknowledged in the expansion of literacy through the education it provides in the *yä abenüt temehert* (Church education).<sup>8</sup>

Beside the monastery as a storehouse of priceless and incredible tangible cultural heritages like manuscripts, and a number of historical materials and old buildings, it does not benefit from tourism. Hence, the paper assessed documented heritages and also investigated the challenges that hindered tourism development of Märtulä Maryam monastery. It also assessed the monastery's traditional conservation mechanisms it used in preserving its precious cultural heritages.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the long history of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido /monotheist/ Churches and monasteries continued the tradition of fulfilling social responsibility and preserving heritages. Märtulä Maryam monastery as part of it has the store house of incredible hidden heritages which is developed a habit of transferring them to generation through traditional preservation method. Scholars, historians and writers are often tended to emphasize merely the introduction and expansion of Christianity and monasticism of Märtulä Maryam monastery yet they lack comprehensiveness in relation to its heritages. Basically, Märtulä Maryam has been rarely visited, and few travelers have left a record of their visit. Among those Portuguese Petro de Covilhao, Jesuit Manoel d' Almeida, English men,

<sup>6</sup>Yalemzewd Dessie, "A History of Märtulä Maryam Monastery from its Foundation to the Present" (MA Thesis: Aksum University, 2019), pp.75-80.

<sup>7</sup>Informant: Tämäsgän Ebabu who is heritage preservation department head in ESMW

*wäräda* cultural and tourism office

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

C. T. Beke, Italian Guida dell Africa, English woman, Djana Spencery, and Stephon Bell who are personally visited the area and put their notion in the traditions as well as history of Märtulä Maryam. Moreover, writers like Habtamu Mengestie, Paul B. Henze, Philip Briggs, John Gram, George and Dr. Habtamu Assefa, Takla Eyäsus Wakjera, Richard Smith, Richard Green Field and also Silvia Pankhurst write about the debatable issue of the monastery foundation rather than the hidden heritages traditions and traits. So, the reason for undertaking this study was to publicize the hidden incredible heritages found at the historic town of Märtulä Maryam and also developing a sustainable tourism management framework for the host communities.

### 1.2 Objective

#### General Objective

The general objective of the study which was formulated to guide the study is to assess the Forgotten Heritages of Märtulä Mariam Monastery and Its Trials for sustainable Tourism Development.

#### Specific Objectives

To guide the study, the following specific objectives were identified:

- To explicate stakeholder perceptions, toward the major issues facing sustainable tourism management at Märtulä Maryam in order to identify gaps in management effectiveness.
- To expound the mechanisms how the monastery communities traditionally preserve and transfer it to generations.
- To identify the major challenges, which hinder heritage tourism development in Märtulä Maryam monastery
- To document the heritages which are found at Märtulä Maryam monastery

#### Significance of the Study

The study demonstrated in publicizing the hidden heritages, the regression level, the indigenous knowledge of preservation, potentiality for the sustainable tourism and its traits of Märtulä Maryam monastery. The findings, therefore, used as an impute to formulate a working recommendation to safeguard the heritages from future inappropriate conservation interventions; to slow down further deteriorations; to see possibilities of reversing past interventions that have damaging impact; to see the tourism possibilities and to plan the way forward for future Sustainable tourism. Subsequently, the paper will avail in providing an essential asset for communities of the study area, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, Non-Governmental organizations, foreign legation and concerned government bodies like Woreda, Zonal, and Regional cultural and tourism bureau. Moreover, Historians, researchers and Journalists serve as a source of data to investigate the pre-existing phenomena and to conduct a further research on the same or similar issues.

### 1.3 Research Methodology

The research methodology encompasses two main parts namely a literature review and an empirical study. The latter

part includes the research design and methodology of data collection; the sampling plan; the development of the questionnaire and finally data analysis.

### Research Design

In order to organize this study in a good manner the researcher employed descriptive design of qualitative research approach. Because, qualitative type of research approach enable the researcher to yield rich and detail information and allowing an issue to be explored in great depth about the Forgotten Heritages of Märtulä Mariam Monastery and Its Trials for sustainable Tourism Development. Thus, the researcher preferred descriptive qualitative research approach so as to detailed narrate, describe and interpret different written materials will be obtained from different sources.

### Data Collection Method

The main sources used for the study comprised both primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from the sample population through interviews, focus group discussions and extended personal observations. Regarding the secondary data, the researcher employs Published and unpublished sources such as, books, journals, magazines, proceedings, pamphlets and articles. Hence, the available sources that the researchers will attempt to use the aforementioned sources on the topic of the study consulted from the study area (during on site observation), NALA (Ethiopian National Archival and Library Agency), Hadis Alemayehu archival centre of Debre Markos University, archives from East Gojjam Zone cultural and tourism department and Institute of Ethiopian Studies.

### Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed purposive Sampling methods in which respondents are chosen purposefully who are believed to have the knowledge on the required information. As a result, community elders, heads of the churches, Zonal Heritage and tourism department experts and Woreda cultural and tourism office experts are target groups. It is a non-random method that does not need causal theories or a set number of participants. Moreover, the researcher decided what needed to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge, age and experience. It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information rich cases for the most appropriate utilization of available resources.

### Data Analysis Method

In order to analyse the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and the contents of interviews and personal observation the researcher employed interpretive and descriptive method analysis.

### Data Quality Assurance

It's onerous to assess the issue without painstaking interview of informants in which the researcher may use Monks, Nuns, the then government officials, eldest, patriots, clearages, and letters, diaries and written sources. So, the researcher is discreet for its informants as well as the information what is obtained. To make the data which gathers from different interviewee valid, the researchers document it both in

written and in audio recordings form and translate the concepts directly word by word. In other words, the information that found from the informants is interpreted accurately. In order to make the collected data reliable and the results representative, the sample populations are selected from the local community's elderly people, the clergies of the church, tourists and culture tourism officers. Besides, to enhance the reliability of the primary data the researcher used secondary sources as verification.

## 2. Historical development of registering Märtulä Maryam monastery Heritages

Heritage can be defined as everything that is inherited from the past such as structures, objects, images, ideas, sentiments (expression of fillings or ideas), and practices, which describes and witness the evolution of man and nature through centuries.<sup>9</sup> Heritage can be classified as natural and cultural. Cultural sites may include large-scale archaeological sites, sacred spaces, ancient monuments, and historic buildings and structures of different ages and sizes. Hence, Cultural sites serve an important role in communities today. They represent a connection to and continuity with the past while envisioning a cultural inheritance for future generations.<sup>10</sup> Cultural heritage classified in to tangible and intangible.<sup>11</sup> Tangible heritages are those remains that can be seen or touch that can be divided in to movable and immovable. Movable cultural heritage is a heritage that can be moved from place to place easily, while immovable cultural heritages are not moved from place to place which is simply fixed to the earth with its foundation.<sup>12</sup>

According to Ethiopian Heritage administration proclamation No.229/1958, any man made work that was formed before 1850 considered as ancient heritages. However, heritage research and conservation proclamation No.36/1982 stated that, in the history of Ethiopia those historically important in art, science, and culture considered as heritages. According to the proclamation human, animal and plant fossils; buildings and monuments; ancient ruins of towns, tombs, cave pictures, vellum scripts, stone scripts, effigies and pictures made by Iron, Gold, Silver, Bronze, Stone, Skin, Wood, and Rhinoceros horn; soils; documentation of cinematography, document, photograph; coins made from gold, silver and bronze; church, monasteries, mosques; and cultural materials of Ethiopian nations considered as heritages.<sup>13</sup> Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahido* Church and Monasteries are comprised various historical and religious heritages which become a symbol of national pride of Ethiopia. This intern influenced Emperor Haile Selassie to concentrate more on heritages found in

<sup>9</sup>Bägaşaw Belay, *yä qerse amüzägagäb seltäna manual*, (Baher Dar: 1997), pp. 2-9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Zälaläm Gétnät, Assessing potential and challenges of Haiq Estifanos communal monastery for cultural heritage Tourism development", *African Journal of History and Culture*, vol. 10(1), 31junuary (2018), pp.15-24.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Begashaw, p. 5.



different churches and monasteries of Ethiopia. <sup>14</sup> Märtulä Maryam monastery is the one which is rich in cultural heritage and also the community of the monastery had passed a good habit of preserving and protecting their cultural heritages and transmitted from generation to generation. <sup>15</sup>

Emperor Haile Selassie Understand the significance of heritages to historical research, in publicizing our country Ethiopia good will to the world and developing tourism industry. These significance forced the Emperor to send Mälakä Berhan Admasu Jämbäré to Gojjam provinces aiming to register the known Churches and Monastery heritages found in the province specially Märtulä Maryam monastery in 1966. <sup>16</sup> In the meantime, the Emperor sends those peoples who trained how to register heritages to document in manual as well as if it is possible in photograph. <sup>17</sup>

Later on the military junta in 1976 ordered all provinces to begun re registering and photographed heritages found in different ancient churches and monasteries. <sup>18</sup> What differ *Derg* from the Imperial regime is, besides registering those heritages found in Gojjam province particularly in Märtulä Maryam monastery, *Derg* tried to preserve those endangered heritages found within the monastery by sending experts. <sup>19</sup>

The military regime established registration of heritages by classifying them in six categories in 1978 with responsibility for building up an inventory of cultural property. Indeed, registering of heritages also done through scientific code that is important to protect heritages displacement. <sup>20</sup> For instance one heritage found in Märtulä Maryam Monastery registered as AM-EM-III-8 indicates how coding system of registering heritages is important. Hence, AM indicates the region in which the heritage found named Amhara, EM indicates the *wäräda* in which the heritage registered named Enäbsé Sar Meder, III this roman number indicates the category of the heritage for instance this roman number indicates paintings and 2 indicates each heritage specific code. <sup>21</sup> As Märtulä Maryam is endowed a unique cultural heritages, She registered the following cultural tangible heritages in the category listed below the table.

**Table 1:** List of cultural heritages found in Märtulä Maryam Monastery

Regn Code No	Types of treasures/heritages/ with their Groups	No of Heritages
I	Historical Buildings and Monuments	4
II	Historical Places and Natural Sites	1

<sup>14</sup>HAACDMU, Fol No. 21, File No. ሙ/ሀ-1, *selä qerse mezgäba* and see also Fol No. 75,

File No. ሙ/ሐ-1, *selä qerse mezegäba*.

<sup>15</sup>Informant: Tämäsgän Ebabu who is heritage preservation department head in ESMW *wäräda* cultural and tourism office.

<sup>16</sup>HAACDMU, Fol No. 115, File No. ሙ.ተ.4, *tarikawi qeresoš atäbabäq, yä qerse mämäzgäbia form ena yä tourism awaj*.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>HAACDMU, Fol No. 61, File No. ሙ/ሙ/9, *selä märtulä maryam bétäkerestian edesat*.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>See notes 13.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

III	Paintings	12
IV	Books and Documents	190
V	Works of Art and Crafts, both ecclesiastical and secular	110
VI	Archaeological Site and Findings.	1

Source: ESMW cultural and tourism office <sup>22</sup>

From the above figure, all in all the monastery is taken as rich in heritages. Besides registering of heritages in number and name, each heritages are also registered its height, thickness, dimension, stature, mass, shape, number of pictures, number of pages and even the circumstance also registered.

## 2.1. Precious Immovable Cultural Heritage of Märtulä Maryam Monastery

### 2.1.1. Church Buildings

Church buildings always indicate a direction for the new ones, but some architectural heritage is kept and restored to remind us how great our civilization once was. Church buildings especially old buildings like twelve temple Abreha wä Ašebeha Cathedral and others are very important: they give us a link between what we see today and what we were in the past. Hence, heritage buildings also give us a more exciting and a memorial feel, in contrast to the tall modern glass and steel structures around them. Cultural heritage always adds a distinctive character and gives a sense of history and memory of a place, time and space. <sup>23</sup>

There are four church buildings situated in the hill top mountain of Märtulä Maryam Monastery namely Abreha wä Ašebeha, Saint Mary church, Holly Trinity church and also the new ongoing building cathedral named as Märtulä Maryam Cathedral. Even if Ethiopian churches traditionally were and continued to be rounded, there are numerous exceptions like Märtulä Maryam that has a home of different church designs. The first twelve temple Abreha wä Ašebeha rectangular mortared stone work cathedral of Märtulä Maryam was built by twin kings named as Ezana and Saizan in 333AD, yet the cathedral was gave service till the coming of Yodit Gudit who burnt the cathedral. The second St. Virgin Mary round shape church decorated with different colors was at first built by Anbäsa Wudim in 892AD, yet the church took the current shape after the renewal of the church so many times by the then rulers like Dawit II, Aşé Baedä Maryam, and Queen Elleni and Emperor Haile Selassie renewed. The third rectangular Saint Trinity church was built in 1928 by Emperor Haile Selassie. The last and the resent ongoing Saint Mary rectangular Cathedral building is started in 2014 with estimated cost of 80 million Ethiopian birr. <sup>24</sup>

However, preservation of the old church buildings like twelve temple Abreha wä Ašebeha rectangular mortared stone work of the monastery was begun since from 1990s

<sup>22</sup>Archives from ESMWCTO, Fol No. ቀ-1/02 *qers ena museum* and also see archives from Märtulä Maryam monastery museum, Fol No. 13/98, *märtulä maryam gädam astädädär*.

<sup>23</sup>Archives from ESMWBTB, Fol No. ቀ-1/02 *qers ena museum, Yä märtulä maryam gädam yä mäşäläya sera nedef*.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

onwards. Formerly, in 1970 *Re`ese Re`usan Abba La`ekä Maryam* who was the abbot of the monastery by mobilizing the community, he tried to conserve the old twelve temple Abreha wä Ašebeha cathedrals through cement. However, due to unprofessional and unwise conservation as well as restoration method, the above priceless heritages lost its authenticity and beauty. Since then the first wooden shelter that would protect the ruins was built in 1991.<sup>25</sup>



**Figure 1:** A photo of twelve temple cathedral taken from the monastery.

The above magnificent Abreha wä Ašebeha rectangular mortared stone work Cathedral indicates that, how our civilization was very great and also made the current generations proud for their past. As shown from the above photo, the rectangular church had altar slabs of solid gold sheeting; decorated ashlar arch design, twenty four Angels in decorated stone work with decorated beam support, sheeting in gold and silver that was the entire building covered by roof made from flatbed stone came from Gunt a place found in Šäguat.

## 2.2. Precious Movable Cultural Heritages of Märṭulä Maryam Monastery

### 2.2.1. Manuscripts

In fact, monasteries and churches in Ethiopia have been the storehouses of manuscripts and archival documents. The libraries of ancient churches and monasteries located in Ethiopia have preserved large collections of important old manuscripts, most of them unique specimens.<sup>26</sup> These documents are not only valuable for their artistic beauty and ecclesiastical works but also for their content, for they inform on historical issues, astronomy, philosophy, and culture. Moreover, manuscripts are valuable historical records, liturgical and prayer books and the source of

information of our ancestors.<sup>27</sup> Märṭulä Maryam Monastery is one of the above mentioned monasteries in which one can find significant number of documentary heritages. Basically, manuscripts in the monastery made of the skin of animals particularly from goat and cow skin and written by hand specifically by those known communities named as Enebré / a place where hand writing experts were lived that they were named by the twin kings /.<sup>28</sup> Hence, the selection of animals is depending on the size of the manuscript. For instance, if the manuscript is psalm which is short they used goat while, if the manuscript is big like Sinksar they used cow skin.<sup>29</sup> Basically the selection of goat skin rather than sheep is religiously Sheep symbolizes naivety in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church teaching and is positively accepted, whereas, goat symbolize sinner. To write on the manuscripts they used red and black ink, which was prepared from different plant leaves, flowers, soils and cereals. To accomplish a single book it could have taken a maximum of one year.<sup>30</sup> The inner sheets of many of those books are adorned with various paintings of saints, prophets, martyrs, angels, Jesus Christ and Holy Virgin Mary. Indeed, all in all manuscripts found in the monastery is wooden cover, yet few of them are sheeting through Gold, bronze and silver.<sup>31</sup>

However, manuscripts in Märṭulä Maryam monastery were subject to natural deterioration and destruction. Hence, once those manuscripts are lost, they are irreplaceable, any loss at present stage is final, and reconstruction is impossible. The loss of these documents in any reason would be disastrous. Even the loss of parts of a record from these collections in whatever cause is disaster or irreplaceable.<sup>32</sup>

**Table 2:** List of manuscripts found Märṭulä Maryam monastery

No	Name of Manuscript	Type	Quantity
1	<i>Gädlä Abrha wä Ašebeha</i>	Vellum	2
2	<i>Gädlä Ewosšašiwos</i>	Vellum	3
3	<i>Gädlä Abunä Sälama</i>	Vellum	2
4	<i>Gädlä Giorgis</i>	Vellum	1
5	<i>Gädlä Gäbrä Mänfäs Qedus</i>	Vellum	3
6	<i>Gädlä Hawaryat</i>	Vellum	2
7	<i>Gädlä Ewosšašiwos with Dersanä Gabriél</i>	Vellum	1
8	<i>Dersanä Uraél</i>	Vellum	1
9	<i>Gebrä Hemam</i>	Vellum	2
10	<i>Dersanä mahenowi (Hemamat)</i>	Vellum	2
11	<i>Meşehafä Berehan</i>	Vellum	1
12	<i>Meşehafä Fälasfa</i>	Vellum	2
13	<i>Mäşehafä Mänäkosat</i>	Vellum	2
14	<i>Mäşehafä Qädär</i>	Vellum	1
15	<i>Meşehafä Genezat</i>	Vellum	2
16	<i>Meşehafä kerestena</i>	Vellum	1
17	<i>Meşehafä Qändil</i>	Vellum	1
18	<i>Meşehafä Ezra</i>	Vellum	1
19	<i>Meşehafä Nägäst ena Orit</i>	Vellum	1

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Belay Gidey, *Ethiopian civilization*, (Addis Ababa: Brehanna Selam Printing Press, 1998), p.32; and see also Denis. *Nosnitsin*, "Ethiopian Manuscripts and Ethiopian Manuscript Studies: a brief overview and evaluation" in *Gazette du livre médiéval*, no 58 2012, fasc. 1., p.2.

<sup>27</sup> Andrzejewski and et al. *Literature in African Language: Theoretical issues and sample survey*, (Cambridge: Cambridge university press, 1985), p.203.

<sup>28</sup> Informants: *Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä* and *Tämäsgän Ebabu*.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, and see also notes 11.

<sup>31</sup> Informant: *Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä* and *Tämäsgän Ebabu*.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

20	<i>Fäwusä Mänfäsawi</i>	Vellum	2
21	<i>Haymanotä Abäwu</i>	Vellum	2
22	<i>Sereatä Mehela</i>	Vellum	1
23	<i>Zëna Ayhud</i>	Vellum	1
24	<i>Mälkä Şadëq</i>	Vellum	1
25	<i>Dersanä Mikaél</i>	Vellum	1
26	<i>Dersanä Mädhanialäm</i>	Vellum	1
27	<i>Arganon</i>	Vellum	4
28	<i>Raey Yohannes wangle lä yohannes</i>	Vellum	1
29	<i>Däqiq Näbiat</i>	Vellum	2
30	<i>Arké (yä abba Sälama se`el yaläbät</i>	Vellum	1
31	<i>Yä mä`alt säatat</i>	Vellum	1
32	<i>Tereguamé wangle</i>	Vellum	1
33	<i>Fetha Nägäst</i>	Vellum	2
34	<i>Misşerä Şimay</i>	Vellum	1
35	<i>Mäzgäbä Haimanot</i>	Vellum	1
36	<i>Danél eyob Däqiq näbiat</i>	Vellum	1
37	<i>Şolotä Eşan</i>	Vellum	3
38	<i>Sereatä menkusena</i>	Vellum	3
39	<i>Senä feşerät</i>	Vellum	1
40	<i>Zëna Abäwu</i>	Vellum	1
41	<i>Yä amät senk sar</i>	Vellum	1
42	<i>Arké</i>	Vellum	3
43	<i>Degwa</i>	Vellum	5
44	<i>Şomä deggwa</i>	Vellum	8
45	<i>Läha Maryam</i>	Vellum	1
46	<i>Qedasé balä meleket</i>	Vellum	6
47	<i>Aemadä miser</i>	Vellum	2
48	<i>Siraket Solomon</i>	Vellum	1
49	<i>Nägärä Maryam</i>	Vellum	1
50	<i>Tamerä Maryam</i>	Vellum	2
51	<i>Dawit</i>	Vellum	9
52	<i>Filekesetos</i>	Vellum	2
53	<i>Didiseteleya</i>	Vellum	2
54	<i>Mäqabis</i>	Vellum	1
55	<i>Wudassé Amlak</i>	Vellum	6
56	<i>Qérlöss</i>	Vellum	3
57	<i>Paulos</i>	Vellum	3
58	<i>Sinodos</i>	Vellum	1
59	<i>Essayas</i>	Vellum	2
60	<i>Ermias</i>	Vellum	1
61	<i>Arba Zëna</i>	Vellum	1
62	<i>Hénok</i>	Vellum	1
63	<i>Paulos balä berr ena wärq</i>	Vellum	1
64	<i>Säatat</i>	Vellum	4
65	<i>Zemaré mäwäset</i>	Vellum	2
66	<i>Me`eraf</i>	Vellum	6

Source: list of treasures and assets of Märütlä Maryam monastery.<sup>33</sup>

The most important and questionable manuscript to be noticed from the above list is the unknown dating of *gädlä Abrha wä Aşebha* /hagiography of twin Aksumit kings/. In fact, knowing the exact manuscripts dating is impossible, yet according to William wright, three Ge`ez writing developments take place in the history of Ethiopia. Hence, according to him, before 15<sup>th</sup> c Ge`ez writing was more angular as well as big, from 15<sup>th</sup> c to 17<sup>th</sup> c the writing development of Ge`ez becomes rounded and small and after 17<sup>th</sup> c the writing development of Ge`ez language is mostly

<sup>33</sup>Archives from Märütlä Maryam Monastery museum, Fol No. 98/2000, *Qesä Gäbäz märiqëta Tamerä Ejegu, yä märütlä maryam gädäm tarikawi qers ena nebrät zerzer* /list of treasures and assets of Märütlä Maryam monastery/.

elegant in a small size and rectangle shape.<sup>34</sup> By using these writing development historians like Habtamu Mengestie postulated the hagiography of twin kings found Märütlä Maryam monastery becomes forgery which was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>35</sup> However, the fact in which the hagiography was copied from the original hagiography found Aksum Şion in the early 19<sup>th</sup> c by a person called as Sém Dässalän.<sup>36</sup>

**2.2.2. Crowns**

Crowns made from gold, silver and bronze are found in Märütlä Maryam Monastery. In the monastery museum there are six crowns gifted by different rulers of Ethiopia namely, Aşé Baedä Maryam, twin kings Abreha wä Aşebha, Aşé Zera Yacob, Aşé Gälawdios, Säblä Wängél and Queen Eleni.<sup>37</sup>



Figure 2: A photo of different crowns taken from the monastery museum

As illustrated from the above photo, the upper top of each crown had steeple like structure and crosses and even each crown circumstance had engraved by different angels as well as inscriptions. Indeed, those crowns are decorated with different designs with different sizes. Basically, the above rulers crown indicates how the monastery had strong linkage with the then rulers the monastery played a significant role in the monarchical state system that existed for thousands of years to 1974.

**2.2.3. Crosses**

The other incredible movable tangible cultural heritage found within the monastery museum is different crosses made from gold, silver and bronze. In fact, most of those big crosses are sheeting by different words and pictures like angels made from mixing gold and silver that shows the ability of the then artisans. Among those crosses the one named as *afro aygeba* cross/አ ፍሮ አ ይገ ባ ማክ ቀል/ literally the cross is unabashed in case of improvise. Hence, the cross came out from the monastery in case of unrest, civil war, drought, famine, disease as well as during socio economic and political crises for the sake of blessing the country from those difficulties. Basically, those crosses are hand over to the monastery by different kings like from the twin kings, bishops like *Abba Sälama*, and from different noble men's.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup>Greenfield, pp. 177-179.

<sup>35</sup>Habtamu Mengestie, pp.1-5.

<sup>36</sup>Informants: *Re`ese Re`usan Qomos Abba Haylä Eyäsus Tadé, Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä* and also *Grazmaş Wärkenäh Mälässä*.

<sup>37</sup>Informants: *Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä* and *Tämäsgän Ebabu*.

<sup>38</sup>Informants: *Re`ese Re`usan Qomos Abba Haylä Eyäsus Tadé, Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä* and also *Grazmaş Wärkenäh Mälässä*, that the unabashed cross is the most sacred one in which the monastery communities especially *Re`ese Re`usan* blessed by using the sacred



However, even if the monastery is rich in heritages like crosses, they are simply fasten by one fasten mix with different materials that overshadow the historical value and even due to lack of preservation of those crosses they are simply begun to rust. Indeed, each cross is lap over the other which is difficult for visitors as well as conserving them.<sup>39</sup>

#### 2.2.4. Paintings

Painting is an important component of Christian education though it was not given high emphasis like that of liturgy, chanting etc... which is necessary in the day to day routine of the Church.<sup>40</sup> The monastery was registered twelve astonishing paintings made from wooden, vellum and cloth. Beside those astonishing paintings, most of parchment books found within the monastery museum have many paintings of icons as well as picture of angels.<sup>41</sup> However, neither existing written records nor traditions give a satisfying explanation as to how these icons were painted as well as from where they brought to the area and their exact origin.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 3:** A photo of wooden box icon painting of virgin with child

The above astonishing modular or wooden box Icon painting of virgin with child is regarded as the work of St. Luke taken as a sacred object. Hence, the Icon is believed to be an assurance of protection against natural catastrophes such as drought and epidemics. Since, during the military regime the icon having been taken away by robber. In fact, the icons served as sources of inspiration for painters of the medieval as well as later periods.<sup>43</sup> However, as we intern from the icon, lack of preservation affect the icon margins part becomes flaked.

#### 2.2.5. Raiment's

Märtulä Maryam Monastery had also rich in raiment's hand over from different rulers and nobles of the then rulers. For instance, within the monastery raiment's forwarded from Queen Elleni, Säblä Wängél, Aşé Baedä Maryam, Grañ Ahmad, Ras Haylu Täklä Haimanot, and also different noble's raiment had also collected.<sup>44</sup>



**Figure 4:** A photo of Imam Ahmad Ibin Ibrahim Algaze /Gragh Ahmad/ coat taken from the monastery museum.

The above Grañ Ahmad robe was hand over by Gälawdios after the math of the conflict between the Christian highland king dome and Muslim sultanate. Since, in the course of the conflict Säblä Wängél, wife of Lebenä Dengel or mother of Gälawdios advised Dagama who commanded 400 Portuguese musketeers to delay fighting by preparing winter camp at Wofla. At the same time she also told to her son to going and makes a stretching /selät endisal lakächew/ at Märtulä Maryam monastery of Gojjam wished for them good in fighting against Grañ Ahmed. According to his stretching, if he becomes victorious over Gragn Ahmed through St. Marry miracle, he will promise to forward their and Grañ Ahmed glory robe to the church. In the course of the war Gälawdios assisted by Portuguese routed and killed Grañ Ahmed on 21, Feb, 1943 at the battle of Wäyna Däga. Respecting his oath towards his stretching in winning against Grañ Ahmed, he forward his family gold crown and Grañ Ahmed glory robe to Märtulä Maryam monastery. Since, then they named the monastery as *yä Gragn Emäbété* / named for memorizing St. Marry miracle in defeating Grañ Ahmed/.<sup>45</sup>

#### 2.2.6. Ecclesiastical Religious Materials

There are many different ancient church equipment's are found in Märtulä Maryam monastery. These are church equipment's that are not found in other monasteries. The type of crosses, church traditional clothes and other important properties of the monastery are grouped into the ancient one but there is no exact time indicated part of them. Many of church equipment's are offered from kings of believers. Hence, the monastery has many church musical instruments: like golden and silver *Kebero* /drum/, *Şenaşel* /the cestrum/, holy books, umbrella, crosses, the *Tabot* /replica of the Arc of Covenant/, *megonaşäfia* /robe/ sheeted through gold and silver and others become the dominant one.<sup>46</sup>

### 3. Challenges Faced Cultural Heritages in Märtulä Maryam Monastery

Cultural heritage represents the identity of a community, and this memory comes from the past, it lives today and is transmitted to present and future generations. This means that every category of cultural heritage has something in common: there has to be an identity component that represents the culture of any community.<sup>47</sup> However, those

cross in case of improvise occurred in our country as well as the community.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Abebaw, p.23.

<sup>41</sup>Archives from ESMWCTO, Fol No. ቁ-1/02 *qers ena museum and also see archives from Märtulä Maryam monastery museum, Fol No. 13/98, märtulä maryam gädam astädädär.*

<sup>42</sup>Abebaw, p.24.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>See notes 41

<sup>45</sup>Informants: Grażmaş Wärkenäh Mälässä, Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä and Tämäsgän Ebabu.

<sup>46</sup>See notes 38

<sup>47</sup>ICCROM, Protecting Cultural Heritage in time of conflict: contribution from the participants of the international course on first aid to cultural heritages in times of conflict, (Rome: 2010),

cultural heritages are threatened as well as deteriorating by natural and human factors. 48 The principal climatic factors responsible for the deterioration of Märtulä Maryam monastery heritages are solar radiation, temperature variation, direct rainfall impact, wind pressure and humidity. Hence, the monastery cultural heritage specifically the old buildings like twelve temple cathedral built in the 4th c by the twin kings, the monastery fences, old tombs, old houses and limestone masher buildings are begun to deteriorating as a result of naturally in the above mentioned climate factors. 49

Apart from natural disasters and some biological and environmental causes of deterioration of cultural resources, there are human causes of demolition that arise through socio-political reasons. Such factors are quite different from the consequences of ordinary human activities, such as air pollution, traffic or improper management of heritage resources. 50 Basically, as religious buildings are associated with common spiritual values of communities and as heritage sites they possess great significance. In the case of armed conflicts between groups of different religious affiliations, they either become the first targets of destruction or are abandoned when communities are displaced. 51 One of the most destructive factors that can threaten cultural heritage of Märtulä Maryam monastery emerges from a country's instability during civil unrest as well as civil war and aggression. Since the monastery was highly demolished during Yodit Gudit war of 9th c, Muslim Christian conflict of Ethiopia in the 16th c, Italian Aggression of 1935 and also during the 1974 popular revolution of Ethiopia. Hence, protection of cultural heritage can be of low priority when human lives are at risk and administrative sectors such as police, heritage guards or rescue services are unable to act properly. 52

Another human factor which becomes responsible for the deteriorating of heritage resources during sociopolitical crisis is the vandalism and looting of cultural heritages. 53 Hence, the monastery heritages were so many times looted by different bandits like Assefa Hailu who was the known bandit came from Wollo province, *Fitawrari* Guangul who was the known Buré Däga Damot bandit, Italians when *Ras Haylu Bäläw* allied with *däjazmaš Belay Zäläkä* fought them at ESMW on the way of the enemy marched to Biçäna and Dejen in 1938<sup>54</sup> and also the monastery was looted by soldiers of Däräbé in 1976 /literally those peoples who donkey as their transportation who lived in the *däga* ecology of Däbrä Wärq, Mängesto and Biçäna province<sup>55</sup>. As

Assayä Tamäwa who participated during the war told me that, in opposing the military regime land proclamation, the Gojjam peoples made an oath and rebelled against the government of *Derg*. In response the government massacred Biçäna peoples from August 21-23, 1975 which leads to the submission of Biçäna, Enämay and Däbrä Wärq. To its annoyance, the military regime removes Yeresé Moñenät and replaced him by Mähary Yohannes as governor of Bišäna *awraja*. According to him, the submission of those aforementioned Gojjam provinces to the government is disliked by the remaining Gojjam provinces like ESMW. Then, the two groups began to wage war one another and after many preparations, Biçäna, Enämay and Däbrä Wärq peoples allied with the government force agreed up on to loot Märtulä Maryam in 1976. Hence, the conflict was known as Däräbé war. According to informants, Däräbé soldiers planned to loot Märtulä Maryam Monastery by considering the local community as a weak one that did not resist their power and metaphorically as:

እነ ብሴና እነ ሴ ሦ ጎ ሙዛር አ ጥር፤  
ይገ ጥሞቻ ል ብዎ እኔ ምል ል ሚ ጥር: :

The above poetry was simply forwarded from Däräbé soldiers aiming to show their greatness as well as their power by degrading the power of the local community of the monastery. Once they reached in the monastery and even in the community, they looted many treasures without any resistance. After they accomplished their mission of looting the monastery, they began their long march by carrying the stolen material through donkey and when they reached Çeyä a river that connects Enäbsé and Enarj, the local people of Märtulä Maryam surprisingly attacked Däräbé soldiers. Formerly the local community waited till Däräbé soldiers looted what they want by preparing their fortress at Çeyä River. In the course of the conflict, the local community struggle heroically against those Däräbé soldiers and even metaphorically they describe their struggle to protect their heritages as:

እነ ብሴና እነ ሴ ሦ ጎ ሙዛር አ ጥር፤  
አ ጋ ምሆኖ ሙጥኑ ን ሉ ሙ ጥር: :

The above poetry shows the heroic and unexpected attack of the monastery community against those Däräbé soldiers which was formerly without doubt the soldiers misunderstood the local people's resistance towards their power. In the course the local peoples surprisingly attacked them and after they routed them, Märtulä Maryam communities metaphorically describe as:

የ ተ ጫ ች ወን አ ጉ በ ሊ ም አ ሀ ሆ ፤  
ጩ ወ ድ ቆ ቀ ረ የ ቀ ረ ሴ አ ሀ ሆ

The above poetry indicates that even if Däräbé soldiers looted the heritages of Märtulä Maryam monastery, yet the local communities know the reality that no one did win in looting sacred materials. Finally, the community returns the looted heritages and materials to the monastery.

Moreover, the monastery heritages also looted by the local

Mälekanu Yibäetlä who worked in different responsibilities more than 33 years so has a good knowledge about the soldiers of däräbé

p.22; and see also , The U.S.A Fund For Cultural Preservation Annual 10.11 Report, (2011), p.12.

48Minster of Cultural and Tourism, Traditional cultural Heritage Management Practice in Church Property: The case of Däqewa Kidanä Meherät, Dabat Wäräda, (August 28,2018), pp.4-7.

49Informants: Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä and Tämäsgän Ebabu.

50ICCROME, P.60.

51Ibid

52ICCROME, p.60.

53Ibid.

54Fäntahun, p. 35.

55Informants: Grazmaš Wärlenäh Mälässä; Assayä Tamäwa who participated in the course of the war and see also Qängéta



communities including priests, deacons, monks and noble men's. <sup>56</sup> Here is some of the monastery heritages which was robbed at various times by the community itself, the neighboring bandit, the then nobles who held governmental posts, and also externally by Italy.

**Table 3:** List of robbed cultural heritages of Märtulä Maryam Monastery

No	Name of cultural heritage	No of heritages	
1	Crosses	Gold made	2
		Silver made	3
		Bronze made	11
2	Raiment's	Gold robe	3
		Silver Umbrella	1
		Gold crown	1
3	Manuscripts /parchment books/	Gold bedclothes	1
		<i>Gädlä Hawaryat</i>	2
		<i>Gädlä Ewosšašiwos</i>	2
		<i>Gädlä Ewäsšašiwos with Dersanä Gäbriel</i>	1
		<i>Mešhafä Qändil</i>	1
		<i>Senä fešerät</i>	1
		<i>Paulos balä berr ena wärg</i>	1
		<i>Dersanä Mikael bale mesel</i>	1
		<i>Dersanä Uraël</i>	1
		<i>Arké</i>	1
		<i>Orit old testament</i>	1
		<i>Šomä degwa</i>	1
		<i>Märbetä Solomon</i>	1
		<i>Aemadä misešer</i>	1
		<i>Tamerä Maryam balä se'el</i>	1
		<i>Tamerä Maryam</i>	2
		<i>Tamerä Eyäsus</i>	1
		<i>Sereatä neges</i>	1
		<i>Fäwusä Mänfäsawi</i>	1
		<i>Arba Zëna</i>	1
		<i>Mäšhafä fūlasfa</i>	2
		<i>Se'atat</i>	4
		<i>Filekesetos</i>	1
<i>Arganon</i>	1		
<i>Didiseteleya</i>	1		
<i>Mälkä Šadëq</i>	1		

Source: HAACDMU<sup>57</sup>

As we infer from the above table, the monastery lost its incredible treasures in the time of its history. Surprisingly, no concerned body tried to restore those lost heritages.

#### 4. Indigenous Knowledge of Preserving Cultural Heritages of Märtulä Maryam Monastery

According to my informant, Märtulä Maryam Monastery has its own preservation and heritage management techniques which have enabled many treasures transferred to the current generation by surviving those heritages for thousands of years. Indeed, the local communities of Märtulä Maryam town also played a significant role in preserving those priceless heritages in time of socio economic and political

crisis. <sup>58</sup>

As mentioned earlier, climatic factors like solar radiation, temperature variation, direct rainfall, wind pressure and humidity becomes responsible in deteriorating the old building treasures of the monastery. <sup>59</sup> However, those magnificent heritages survived as a tireless effort of the monastery communities by using their own preservation and handling system of heritages. Hence, the monastery repairing tumble down heritages like Elleni Wudemo/ Elleni fence/, limestone masher, old houses, and even few of the old twelve temple cathedral through cinder, the material webbing those crumbled buildings. Later on, the monastery changed their traditional habit of repairing those old building heritages through cinder by the new one named as cement. <sup>60</sup>

According to *Abba Qalä Šedeq*, traditional and modern manuscript collections in Märtulä Maryam monastery have suffered throughout times the effects of war and human-caused destruction. As a result of it the monastery, during troubled times, have resorted to preserving documents by collecting and keeping them in remote and inaccessible locations. For instance, the monastery communities flee by clasping all treasures of the monastery in general and also those manuscripts in particular to Sheber Amba cave, a place 10 km far from the monastery during socio economic and political crisis of the country like Yodit Gudit war, Grañ Ahmad War, Italian Aggression. Indeed, as parchment books made from skin, they simply tie-up each pages due to humidity. However, the monastery community preserves each manuscripts / parchment books/ of each page slowly stroking through rayon cloth, coiling parchment book edged through cloths, cover each book through wood to block humidity and put them in dry places. <sup>61</sup>

Another indigenous knowledge of the monastery in preserving heritages from socio economic and political crisis yet a risk full is depositing those monastery heritages to the local *balabats* as well as eldest peoples who were exemplary in their spirituality, with the full consent of the local community for better protection. What this preservation of heritages is a risk full, the restoration of those heritages is depend on the intent of each depository. Thought, few of them disinclination in restoring those heritages leads to the monastery lost few heritages by the local communities. <sup>62</sup>

#### 5. Challenges for the Development of Heritage Tourism in Märtulä Maryam Monastery

According to 1998 World Tourism Organization, traveling as well as moving of peoples to and staying in a place outside their environment or normal places of residence for not more than one consecutive year aiming for entertain, business, leisure and for other purposes considered as

<sup>58</sup>Informant: Läqšebäbet Gäbäyaw Alämayähu who was the chairman of Gunaguna Qäbällé during Därg Regime and head of peasant cooperation since 1977-1981 in Wärada level who narrate the culture of the local community in preserving heritages.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> HAACDMU, Fol No. 309, File No. ሙ-517 selä märtulä maryam gädäm.

Tourism.<sup>63</sup>

Tourism as an economic sector comes in to being in Ethiopia very recently, compared to other countries in the world.<sup>64</sup> Specifically the government started to pay attention during the second half of the twentieth century. Even though there were some efforts by emperor Menelik II by establishing the first hotel in 1909, tourism as an economic sector got the attention of the imperial government during the 1960's. Since, in the 1960's the government has taken a lot of positive actions to make tourism one potential for the country's economy, the first positive reaction of the imperial government was establishment of the ETO. The second reinforcing move was the invitation of different international organizations and consultants to advise Ethiopian tourism organization on tourism development issues, inventory of monuments, sites, cultural and archaeological artifacts, identifying tourism priority areas and developing short term and long term tourism development plans.<sup>65</sup> Tourism was considered a key economic growth sector in Ethiopia as early as 1966 when the first Tourism Development Master Plan was developed. According to 2006 world bank report, tourism is the third Ethiopian largest foreign exchange next to coffee and oil seeds. As tourism contribute 2% to 7% of the country GDP, Ethiopian government highly engaged in sustainable tourism development program.<sup>66</sup>

Among the pillar segment of tourism, Heritage tourism is an umbrella that comprises both the natural and cultural tourism activity and also taken as the backbone of tourism industry that can be successfully help in preserving resources.

Heritage tourism is a form of tourism that specifically targets the art, architecture, history, monuments, museums, theatres, religious heritage, social interaction, food habits, and lifestyle of people in a certain geographical region.<sup>67</sup> According to Jamie and Eric, heritage tourism deals with traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories, people of the past, and present. It includes irreplaceable historic, cultural and natural resources.<sup>68</sup>

Ethiopia is a land of unique culture and heritage with a history of thousands of years. It is one of the oldest nations in the world. It has huge heritage tourism potential owing to its natural attractions that include some of the highest and lowest places in Africa along with enormous wildlife

<sup>63</sup>Stefanie Jones, Sustainable Heritage Tourism Planning in Ethiopia: An Assessment Framework, (Research Project Submitted In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements For The Degree Of Master Of Resource Management In The School Of Resource And Environmental Management Faculty Of Environment, Simon Fraser University, 2012), p.4.

<sup>64</sup>Sentayähu Aynaläm Aseräs, Assessment of the Potentials Tourism Resources of Choke Mountain and its Environs, Ethiopia, (Department of Tourism and Development, Madawalabu University, Ethiopia, 2015), pp.1-2.

<sup>65</sup>Ashenafi Tafesse, —The Historic route in Ethiopian Tourism Development. African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, vol.5/2/, (2016), pp. 1-13.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Jamie, Eric R, Nebraska Heritage Tourism Plan of Economic Development, (2011),p. 33.

<sup>68</sup>See notes 11

including some endemic ones; a very old and well preserved historical tradition with fascinating stele, churches and monasteries.<sup>69</sup> The Ethiopian Orthodox *Tewahedo* Church comprises various historical and religious resources that are internationally recognized and have a potential to attract domestic and international visitors.<sup>70</sup>

The heritages preserved by the church are highly regarded as tourist attraction resources of the country. There are many monasteries, churches, church museums as well as religious festivals, which have great potential to draw international and domestic tourists. Märtilä Maryam monastery is one of ancient historic, full of tourism potential site and one of the top pilgrimage sites in East Gojjam. Hence, the monastery comprises both spiritual and secular attractions with immense heritage tourism potential.<sup>71</sup>

As discussed so far, the monastery possesses ancient, historic, and religious treasures which have diversified values for different stakeholders. However, these priceless and irreplaceable treasures could not be accessible for domestic and international tourists due to various hindering factors like lack of promotion, lack of awareness, conservation problem, poor handling system of treasures, absence of tourist facilities, and also absence of modern museum.

#### Lack of Promotion

Level of promotion is the most determinant factor that influences the number of visitors in visiting different cultural as well as natural heritage sites.<sup>72</sup> However, Märtilä Maryam monastery whose financial means are largely collected from the local community, believers, agriculture and to some extent from local visitors, the monastery did not carry out much promotion.<sup>73</sup> Beside, financial constraint in publicizing the monastery immense immovable and movable cultural heritages to the public, attitudinal, moral and religious factors are also abstain the monastery from promotion. The monastery does not have its own website that can help to promote its resources; however, they did not promote the tourism resources either through printing or electronics media due to lack of finance and trained man power. Even there is no single billboard on the way to the monastery within Märtilä Maryam town as well as in the nearby town like Gundä Wäyn to indicate the direction where the monastery is located. Due to this and other related hindrances, all the innumerable and priceless heritage of the monastery became inaccessible for domestic and international tourists.<sup>74</sup>

#### Lack of Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the principal element for the development of tourism sector. Hence, the quality of transportation system is the most determinant factor for the accessibility of tourist

<sup>69</sup>Ibid

<sup>70</sup>Ibid

<sup>71</sup>Informants: Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä and Tämäsgän Ebabu.

<sup>72</sup>Bart J.M. van der Aa, Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining world heritage status and the impacts of listing, (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2005), p. 116.

<sup>73</sup>See notes 71

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

attracting areas.<sup>75</sup> Beside this fact, lack of modern transportation service, tourist sites of Ethiopia in general and Märtulä Maryam monastery in particular had remained to be unknown for local as well as foreign visitors.<sup>76</sup> In fact, the first road that connects Märtulä Maryam town, capital of ESMW that own Märtulä Maryam monastery to Gundä Wäyn was inaugurated on April 26, 1975 in which the first car which gave service for the community was named as *lonchina*. Yet as a road from the very beginning become beachy /whether road/, the accessibility of transportation for visitors is not convenient that made the monastery priceless and irreplaceable historical and cultural heritages as well as treasures hidden from public till 2015.

FDRE government planned to build 300km level three concrete road from Kombolša to Gundä Wäyn through two phases. Hence, the first phase of the road extends from Kombolša to Mäkanä Sälam with a total of 192 km and the second phase of 108 km road from Mäkanä Sälam to Gundä Wäyn which connect the two provinces Gojjam and Wollo started in November 2006 EC by CGCOC private China Company with four year finishing time agreement. However, after the company wasted five years the road was inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister Dämäqä Mekonnen in 2015. Since then, the road played an important role for the monastery in which those visitors, journalists, researchers, knowing country associations of the country come to the area and even the regional government gave credit by registering the area as one of tourist sites of East Gojjam zone and even gave financial assistance in building standard museum.<sup>77</sup>



Figure 5: A photo of Abbay Bridge

The above magnificent Abbay Bridge connects the province of Gojjam, particularly Märtulä Maryam town with Mäkanä Sälam, a town found in the south Wollo province. The bridge has a height of 41 meter above sea-level, a length of 280m, width 10.60m and in its inside part it has secret foot

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Gizachew Andargie, —Challenges and prospects of Lake Šana Island Monasteries as a tourist site since 1950s: The case of Kebran Gebreáll, African Journal of History and culture, Vol. 6/4/, (2014), pp. 45-52.

<sup>77</sup>Informants:Täräfä Alämu; Abäbä Mogäs who was a soldier who participated in the war of 1982/83EC by crossing the Abbay river so had a good knowledge about barriers and effect of the river; and also Čané Meteku who became peoples representative at regional level, having deep knowledge about the contact of the people of Wollo and Enäbessé.

path which allow people only.<sup>78</sup> Hence, the above fascinating and impressively erected long run bridge in the line of Qäšäro Mäleka accelerates the day to day socio-economic and political linkage in between the two people. Indeed, the bridge is essential in connecting central Amhara including the study area directly with Djibouti instead of rounding in Addis way.<sup>79</sup>

#### Lack of Standard Museum and Other Related Problems

The present building which is temporary serve as a museum is situated in the western part within the monastery yard in which the monastery treasures are amassed and displayed. Basically, the museum was constructed in November 1991 under a tireless effort of Dr. Gärämaw Däbälé who was the then Minster of Agriculture who forward 500 quintal cement, 10m<sup>3</sup> plank and also one generator. Hence, the building was constructed for the purpose of scullery which is not suitable for museum.<sup>80</sup>



Figure 6: A photo of Märtulä Maryam Monastery museum

In the above building, the two rooms in the ground served as repository class of Agricultural products, whereas, the above floor three rooms from left to right served as a repository of treasures, museum and dormitory of *Qésä Gäbüz*. Hence, the physical position as well as design of the building in general and the darkness of museum room due to absence of mounting and electric light made the museum as uninviting place. Indeed, the museum room is very narrow and has not enough space for tourists that made objects are put over each other as well as many of the monastery's treasure are kept in a separate house due to lack of space in the museum. Beside the above difficulties of the monastery museum in fulfilling its standard, various collections which have been made from organic and inorganic materials are found in the museum. The lion shares of the collections are parchment books, different ruler's raiment, crosses, crowns and ecclesiastical materials.<sup>81</sup> The monastery was one of the hubs of church education and also credited in developing a sophisticated day to day expression called gold and wax /*sem ena wärq*/ which is distinctive in Ethiopia by using Amharic literature. Hence, those monks who had come to the monastery to continue their education wrote different religious, philosophical and astronomical books.<sup>82</sup> Nowadays there

<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Enäbessé Sar Medér Wärada Adminstrative Office, Folder No ሲ.ጁ.ሲ.አሲ, file No. 27,Täsfayä Haylu Bä Amhara Behérawi Kelelawi Mängest Yä Meseraq Gojjam Zone Asetädädär Šehéfät Bét Ref No 2943/h-719, Qen 19/7/1998 EC.

<sup>80</sup>Taken from the foundation stone written on marble that was sheeting on the wall of the monastery museum hoisted in 1983.

<sup>81</sup>Informants: Abba Qalä Šedeq Abäbä and Tämäsgän Ebabu

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.



are more than 190 parchment books within the museum. Some of these are improbably not found elsewhere both in the country and abroad. Some of these parchment manuscripts are collected from its establishment in the 4<sup>th</sup> c to 20<sup>th</sup> century in different area in fact most of them were written and copied within the monastery by different church scholars.<sup>83</sup>

Currently, to cope with the above museum problems the monastery built modern Cathedral and museum with 80 million Ethiopian birr estimated cost in which the premise was hoisted 2014 by *Abunä Mathias* who is the sixth bishop of Ethiopia.

#### Lack of Tourist Facility

Even if the number of tourists who visited the monastery as well as the culture of the community towards tourism increasing from time to time, there is no standard tourist facilities like billboard within the monastery, restaurant, hotels, lodge, guider and souvenir shop. Hence, the above challenges of Märtulä Maryam town that own the monastery forced the visitors not to stay more than an hour as well as one day. Since, the first hotel G<sup>+</sup> with eight bedrooms named Märtulä Maryam hotel inaugurated in 2010. Currently, according to *wäräda* cultural and tourism office the town have more than ten hotels with a total of eighty bedrooms, yet no one did not reached hotel star level.<sup>84</sup>

#### Poor Handling System of Treasures

Märtulä Maryam monastery treasure has been facing great damage due to poor handling method and lack of standard museum. As stated earlier some of the parchment books were covered with wooden panel, fin leather and cloth. However, due to long age many of their cover are damaged, even some parts of the parchment scripts are discolored or faded. Placing external material within the parchment cause discolor of paintings within the book. The worst problem is compiling different parts of the different books in one collection. Lack of appropriate handling also causes devastation of the manuscript and other treasures that are found in the monastery. Lack of conservation due to lack of trained manpower and finance is also serious problem faced by the monastery.<sup>85</sup>



**Figure 7:** A photo of partial parchment books from Märtulä Maryam monastery museum

In the above wooden chests inside the metal made standing box, how the monastery manuscripts faced risk to transfer the next generation and even their position is a brain sick that is not convenient for guiders as well as tourists. As

<sup>83</sup>Graham, p.195; Daniel, pp.58-63; Krzysztof, pp. 31-46; Levine, pp. 2-10; and see also Taddesse, pp. 131-145.

<sup>84</sup>Informants: Abba Qalä Şedeq Abäbä and Tämäsgän Ebabu.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid

illustrated in the picture, the entire book collections in the museum are parchment made of the skin of animals particularly from goat skin and written by hand. Basically, to write on the manuscripts they used red and black ink, which was prepared from different plant leaves, flowers, soils and cereals. To accomplish a single book it could have taken half a year or more. The inner sheets of many of those books are adorned with various paintings of saints, prophets, martyrs, angels, Jesus Christ and Holy Virgin Mary.

#### Lack of Awareness

Though Märtulä Maryam monastery had immense heritage tourism resource, they are not yet exploited properly due to lack of awareness about them. The local community and the clergy have not distinguished which elements is tourism attraction and which is not. Due to this fact some of the valuable treasures are inaccessible for tourist. In the monastery there are different old houses, old buildings and even tombs, as noted so far, but currently they are not considered as heritage tourism resources and no one is giving attention to them. To its chagrin, the monastery community and Märtulä Maryam city hall begun to tumble down ancient homes and tomb outside the monastery yard for the sake of investment and settlement.<sup>86</sup>



**Figure 8:** A photo of ancient homes

As shown from the above photo, lack of awareness towards heritage preservation and heritage tourism the monastery historical houses found either inside or outside the monastery fence are begun to humble down.

## 6. Conclusion

This study has attempted to assess the forgotten incredible cultural heritage of Märtulä Maryam monastery which is an impending for tourism development, the long historic habit of preserving and the hindering factors that challenge heritage tourism development in the monastery. Basically, the monastery continued the tradition of fulfilling social responsibility and preserving heritages. Thus, because of the monastery the skill of writing and preparation of parchment books is still performed in the town of Märtulä Maryam and nearby *qäbällés* like Enäbré. Indeed, the monastery was dully acknowledged in the expansion of literacy through the education it provides in the *yä abenät temehert* (Church education).

Beside the monastery has different historical manuscripts, and a number of historical materials and old buildings, it does not benefit from tourism. The research findings reveal major challenges that have hindered the churches to develop heritage tourism to its full potential as lack of tourist's

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

facility; lack of promotion; poor handling system of the treasures; lack of standard museum and Absence of infrastructure and lack of awareness are the main hindering factors that affect the heritage tourism development in Märtulä Maryam monastery. It also assessed and investigates the monastery's traditional conservation mechanisms in preserving its precious cultural heritages.

## 7. Recommendations

As indicated earlier, the monastery is now faced with formidable challenges. These challenges are very complex and require a craftily designed investigative discourse in order to correctly identify the problems and come up with the right solution. In my opinion, the challenges are many and variegated, and although it may be difficult to diagnose the challenges within the Church itself. Here is the proposed solution or prospects of Märtulä Maryam monastery.

- To avoid the bad habit of embezzlement and inefficient administration in protecting the monastery treasures, employs and volunteers who hold ecclesiastical positions of the monastery should be trained at least once in regarding to the policies and procedures of *Qal Awadi /yä bétäkerestian määdadäria dänb/*. And also if it is possible the monastery should be begun two person rule of especially in those treasurer posts for the sake of accountability, rotation of internal and external auditors.
- To handle the economic challenges of the monastery, the monastery community should be began a new job like handicraft, animal husbandry and also creating conducive environment for tourism. Moreover, the monastery should be construct rental standard houses on its un functional mill house, three in number found within the town of Märtulä Maryam. Besides those mill houses, the monastery also construct business center building in its land found in front of Petrol station of Nok.
- In order to properly utilize the heritage tourism potential of Märtulä Maryam monastery and to attract more tourists to the monastery first constructing modern museum outside the monastery compounds which will be open for regardless of religious as well as gender difference and incorporating additional collection to increase its audience is vital. Secondly, Accommodation and recreational places as well as souvenir shops should be constructed And thirdly, the collaboration of different stake holders like the church community, the host people, the private institutions, East Gojjam Culture and Tourism office, Amhara regional Cultural and Tourism Bureau, travel agents, tourists, volunteer sectors and different institutions in protecting, preserving, conserving, publicizing and developing the sustainability of the monastery heritages.

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