

The Ancient Church of Kidane Mehret

Written by Yishak Yared

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The ancient Church of Kidane Mehret is one of the few Churches that possess the original style of construction known as re'ssi hibey (monkey head) technique. In Eritrea monkey head technique was the most characteristic structural method before and after the Medieval Period. This type of edifice is made up of stone clay masonry of small rough stones and the walls are consolidated at narrow intervals with long squared timbers and held by short round cross pieces of olive woods, the end of which becomes visible as rows of protruded and smoothly rounded re'ssi hibey. This kind of construction technique is observed on different sites stretching far and wide from the ancient port of Adulis to the highlands of Quohaito, Metera and even the Church of Kidane Mehret.

There are two distinct types of churches and monasteries associated with Medieval Period. They are rectangular as well as round churches. Rectangular churches are the most frequent and seem to be more ancient. The Church of Kidane Mehret is from the rectangular types. The three arched doors of the Church's Qedest (the inner room) are completely devoid of paintings. At present only the entrance of the Meqdes is adorned with the images of Angels and the other are fading with time.

Eritrean religious paintings are rich and diversified. The paintings represent sacred personalities and saints and sometimes donors are also portrayed prostrating at the bottom of the

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