

MEMORIST'S EXPERTISE COMMISSIONED BY THE CNRS AND THE ÉCOLE DES CHARTES FOR THE CONSERVATION PROJECT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOLY CITY OF LALIBELA, ETHIOPIA.

European leader in the digitisation of old documents and in the enhancement of heritage and industrial collections, Arkhênum, one of MEMORIST's companies, will be participating in the creation of a digital resource centre for Lalibela's heritage by training religious communities in digitisation techniques.



©iStock / Narvikk - Saint George's Church in Lalibela, Ethiopia. ©Copyright - Saint George's Church in Lalibela, Ethiopia.

In May 2023, MEMORIST experts will be working in Ethiopia as part of *Sustainable Lalibela*, a multi-disciplinary project to protect and enhance the historical and cultural value of the famous rock churches of Lalibela.

Validated in 2019 following a heritage cooperation agreement between France and Ethiopia, *Sustainable Lalibela* began in 2021.

The aim of this vast operation is to gain a more detailed understanding of the site and its sustainable conservation, through research, restoration, enhancement and skills-sharing projects.

The project has five components: emergency intervention on churches, restoration of paintings and sculptures, capacity-building in heritage management, archaeological excavations and the creation of a digital heritage resource centre.

It is on this last component that MEMORIST's expertise is sought.

The aim is to establish a database of the churches' precious holdings, comprising 300 religious manuscripts dating from the XII^e to XVIII^e centuries.

These Bibles and other liturgical documents are still used during services today. Their constant handling, together with the wear and tear of time, contributes to their deterioration. That's why it's now urgent and essential to safeguard this heritage and make the most of it.

Over a two-week period, Arkhênum, with the help of its partner i2S, will train a dozen priests and religious on site in the digitisation process, including inventory, handling, digitisation and the creation of conservation and consultation files.

This training will subsequently enable local communities to handle all the works themselves.

Sustainable Lalibela is managed by the CNRS and the CFEE, and funded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Agence Française de Développement and the CNRS.



LALIBELA WORLD HERITAGE SITE

In the heart of Ethiopia, in a mountainous region 645 km from Addis Ababa, eleven monolithic medieval churches have been carved out of the rock.

Their construction is attributed to King Lalibela who, in the 12th century, undertook to build a

It became known as the "New Jerusalem" after the Muslim conquests put an end to Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

There are two main groups of churches. North and south of the Jordan River. The churches were not built in the traditional way, but were carved out of the rock in monolithic blocks. Doors, windows, columns, different storeys, roofs, etc. were then carved out of these blocks.

This mammoth task was then completed by a vast system of drainage ditches, trenches and passages for processions, sometimes with openings leading to hermit caves or catacombs.

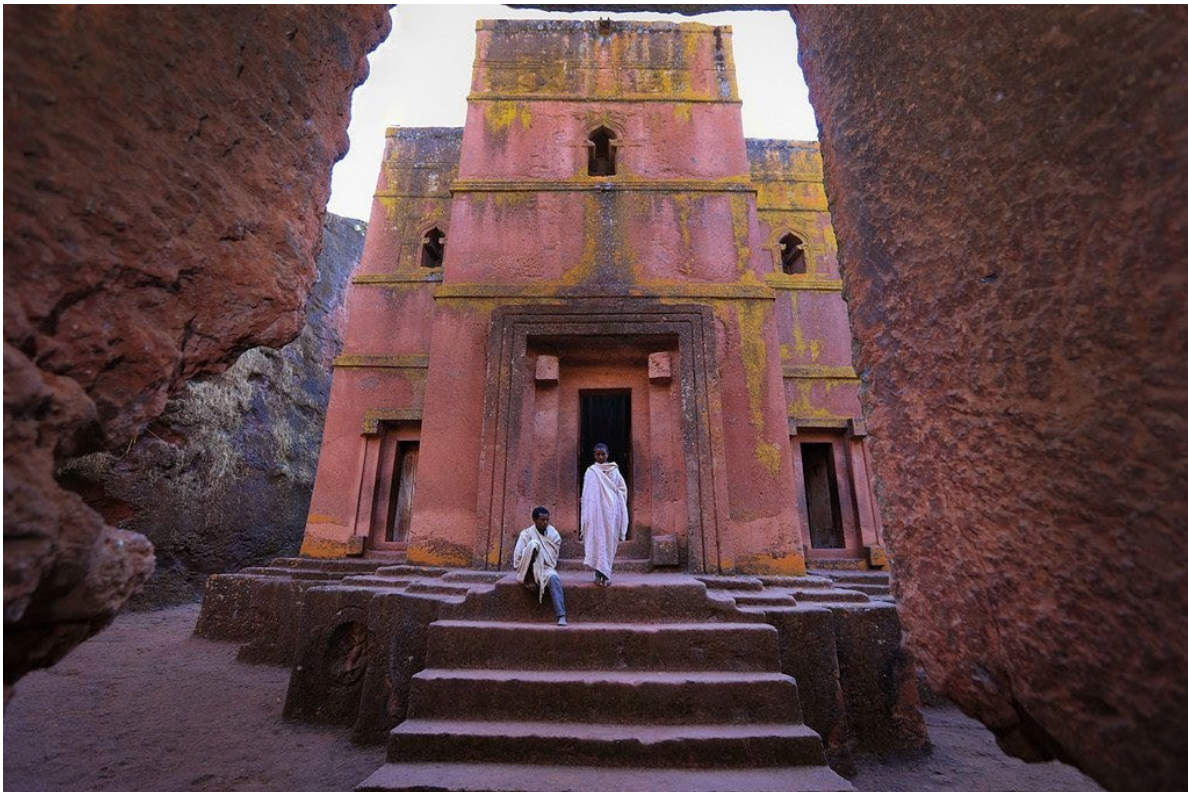
Near the churches, the village of Lalibela features round, two-storey houses built of local red stone and known as Lasta Tukuls.

Lalibela is a major centre of Ethiopian Christianity. These exceptional churches have been a place of pilgrimage for Coptic Christians since the 12th century.

The rock churches of Lalibela remain preserved in their natural environment. The combination of rock-hewn churches and traditional vernacular circular houses in their vicinity still bears witness to the ancient layout of the village.

The original function of the site as a place of pilgrimage remains; there is therefore continuity of social practices. The intangible heritage assets linked to the rites of the Church are still preserved.

Source : [UNESCO](#)



©Unsplash/Mulugeta Wolde - Saint George's Church, in the town of Lalibela, Ethiopia.

THE LEADING SKILLS CENTRE FOR PRESERVING, RESTORING, DIGITISING AND SHARING OUR HERITAGE.

The Mobilitas Group has brought together five leading players to create MEMORIST, the first skills centre for :

Preservation: MEMORIST offers strategic support to holders of heritage collections of all kinds, to establish targeted action plans.

Restoration: MEMORIST uses traditional methods to restore all types of ancient documents (parchments, bundles, covers, iconographic documents, film supports, etc.) and contemporary documents (administrative documents, audiovisual and film supports), in order to prolong their life and restore their appearance that has been altered by time.

Digitisation: MEMORIST digitises paper, iconographic, audio, video and film documents in 2D, and sculptures, monuments and historic sites in 3D, for the purposes of conservation and distribution to different audiences.

Sharing: MEMORIST facilitates the enhancement of heritage, whether historical, documentary or architectural, by relying on a perfect mastery of digital and immersive technologies.

MEMORIST's unique know-how is undeniably recognised on the French market, and it is part of a group with a resolutely international outlook, established in almost 100 countries. Its 240 experts deploy their know-how in

France and abroad, to support museums, public and cultural institutions, private companies and NGOs.

The combination of traditional techniques and innovative technologies, supported by human talent, enables us to implement tailor-made solutions or large-scale projects.

MEMORIST offers a full arsenal of expertise in the field of heritage enhancement, whether tangible or intangible, paper, photos, audiovisual, tangible or built.

MEMORIST's achievements in France include the restoration of eighth-century parchments, the 3D digitisation of the Victory of Samothrace at the Louvre, the management and preventive conservation of Renault's heritage collections, the exhaustive digitisation of the Abbey of Mont-Saint-Michel and Notre-Dame de Paris, and an immersive experience at the Musée d'Orsay using a virtual reality system.

Internationally, Memorist has deployed its expertise in Switzerland (UN, TAG Heuer), South Africa (Jagger Library), Kuwait (Ministry of Information), Austria (National Library), the United Arab Emirates (Louvre Abu Dhabi) and Ethiopia (holy city of Lalibela).

Watch the MEMORIST presentation video by
clicking on the link below
www.thememorist.com/video



MEMORIST EXPERT COMPANIES

Arkhênum: a leader in digitisation and heritage enhancement, Arkhênum helps to shed light on the past and preserve what exists so that history can be passed on to future generations. From archive audits to collection development consultancy, Arkhênum supports its customers at every stage in the development and deployment of their heritage strategies. With the largest technology pool in Europe, Arkhênum digitises all types of media, from the simplest to the most complex, whatever their format, material or state of preservation.

Art Graphique & Patrimoine: from laser scanning to 3D digitisation, from 3D modelling to augmented and virtual reality, AGP offers its innovative approach to art and historic monuments, for museums, institutions and businesses. Thanks to its R&D department, which specialises in architectural and archaeological surveys, in 2009 it developed the first mobile augmented reality prototype for reconstructing decors.

La Reliure du Limousin: since it was founded in 1950, the company has been restoring precious works from the libraries of the Senate and the National Assembly, then those of the departmental and municipal archives. From the restoration of antique collections to traditional bookbinding, the company does its utmost to appraise, conserve and restore the written collections of our past. In 1990, La Reliure became a training centre for the craft of heritage conservation. Since 2010, La Reliure has been a Living Heritage Company.

TRIBVN Imaging digitises all types of photographic documents (glass plates, cellulose nitrates, cellulose acetates, polyester, etc.), images graphic documents (drawings, tracings), images of textiles and accessories, creates "high-performance" digitisation lines for projects requiring them, takes photogrammetric images and carries out preventive conservation work (repackaging in permanent paper, polyester sleeves, cleaning).

Vectracom: founded in France by Gérard Letienne, Vectracom is now run by Célia Letienne and François Tranchand, representing the second generation. This family management of the company echoes that of the Mobilitas group. Vectracom offers content digitisation, digital preservation, metadata creation and film remastering services, as well as a multimedia laboratory (digitisation from all types of media, colour grading, image and audio restoration, etc.).

