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The **Traces** project is hosted by the Hiob Ludolf Centre for Ethiopian Studies at Universität Hamburg (<https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/ethiostudies.html>).

Its main research partners include:

- Beta maṣāḥəft: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea / Schriftkultur des christlichen Äthiopiens und Eritreas: Eine multimediale Forschungsumgebung (<https://www.betamasaheft.uni-hamburg.de/>)
- Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies (COMST, <https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/comst/>)
- CMCL: Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari, Rome/Hamburg (<http://www.cmcl.it>)
- Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC, <http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de>)
- Cluster of Excellence Understanding Written Artefacts (<https://www.written-artefacts.uni-hamburg.de/>)

TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages

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From Translation to Creation:
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Cooperation

An area of ancient written culture from the 1st millennium BCE, the Ethiopian highlands have been home to a complex literary tradition (predominantly in Gəʿəz) that has no parallel in sub-Saharan Africa. Its emergence was determined by Late Antique culture (Byzantium including Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and the Red Sea), Mediterranean cultural encounters, and the African background. The earliest known texts were translations from Greek, later works were adopted from Christian Arabic (esp. Copto-Arabic) literary tradition, in addition to a rich local written production. The complexity of literary history is fully reflected in the changes in grammar, lexicon and stylistic means of the Gəʿəz language.

During the years 2014-2019, the ERC Advanced Grant **Lexos** (Grant Agreement 338756) will analyse in detail the lexical, morphological and stylistic features of texts depending on their origins using the achievements of linguistics, philology, and digital humanities.

The **Lexos** project shall be creating an annotated digital corpus of critically established Ethiopic texts.

Preference shall be given to texts where parallels in the source language (Greek and Arabic) have been established in order to be able to compare the translation techniques and their influences upon the language use. Several texts with unclear origins may be involved at the final proof-of-concept stage. Novel ways of visualization of textual features will be offered to provide insights into the structure, history and evolution of texts.

All texts shall be supplied with multi-level metadata on their known antecedents, parallel versions and recensions, labels and titles, possible date(s) and authorship, place of composition, respective manuscript witnesses with their basic characteristics, and available publications. These descriptions shall serve as the basis of the first-ever structured repertory of Ethiopic texts – a Clavis of Ethiopian literature.

An objective of central importance is the creation of a digital lexicon of the Gəʿəz language.

While inspired by Dillmann’s 1865 ‘Lexicon’, the project objective is a completely different dictionary type, where the choice of lemmas is as complete as possible departing from all the words (lemmas and wordforms, as well as all the possible word meanings) registered in the encoded corpus.

The digital dictionary version will provide full translation and explanation of each lemma, provide main use examples elicited from the natural text corpus as well as be interlinked to the corpus itself for the students and scholars to be able to access the full context (towards a digital Concordance). Morphological patterns shall be specified for all wordforms.

Synonyms and antonyms shall also be listed and interlinked, resulting for the first time in a thesaurus of the Gəʿəz language.

