

150 Years after Dillmann's *@Y /Wb*.  
Perspectives and Challenges of Gəəz Gi Xiyg

Supplement to *Aethiopica*.  
International Journal of Ethiopian  
and Eritrean Studies

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Edited in the Asien-Afrika-Institut  
Abteilung für Afrikanistik und Äthiopistik  
Hiob Ludolf Zentrum für Äthiopistik  
der Universität Hamburg

Series Editor: Alessandro Bausi  
in cooperation with Bairu Tafla, Ulrich Braukämper,  
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2016

Harrassowitz Verlag · Wiesbaden

150 Years after Dillmann's *@Y /Wb*:  
Perspectives and Challenges  
of Gə'əz Studies

Edited by  
Alessandro Bausi  
with assistance from  
Eugenia Sokolinski

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The publication of this volume was supported by the European Union Seventh Framework Programme IDEAS (FP7/2007-2013) ERC grant agreement 338756 (TraCES).

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.dnb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek  
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

For further information about our publishing program consult our website <http://www.harrassowitz-verlag.de>

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Printed on permanent/durable paper.

Typesetting, copy editing, index: Eugenia Sokolinski (Hamburg).

Printing and binding: Memminger MedienCentrum AG

Printed in Germany

ISSN 2196-7180

ISBN 978-3-447-10783-9

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## Preface

The papers collected in this volume, with one exception, were originally presented and discussed during the international conference ‘150 Years After Dillmann’s *Lexicon: Perspectives and Challenges of Gəʿəz Lexicography*’, convened at the Universität Hamburg on 16 and 17 October 2015.

The idea of the conference emerged during the first year of operation of the project *TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*,<sup>1</sup> when the project team has tried to consolidate the state of the art in Gəʿəz lexicography. It became apparent that before proceeding to the actual development of the first electronic web-based dictionary of Classical Ethiopic, aspired by the project, it was essential to have a closer look at all the available dictionaries of Ethiopic, and approach the developments in Ethiopic lexicography also in comparison with what has emerged in the neighbouring disciplines. While the 1865 *Lexicon linguae aethiopiae* by August Dillmann has been chosen as the starting point, there are many aspects in which it must be updated—far beyond the ‘simple’ expansion of the word list.<sup>2</sup>

The two-day conference was opened by the TraCES project team at Universität Hamburg with a group panel, ‘The TraCES project architecture and the Gəʿəz lexicography’. After a general introduction on the ideas behind the project by Alessandro Bausi (see also his Introduction in this volume, pp. 1–10) and the work plan by Eugenia Sokolinski (see this volume pp. 13–16), Wolfgang Dickhut and Susanne Hummel spoke in detail of the challenges they faced when analysing the Gəʿəz grammar with the aim of establishing a limited morphological tag set for computer-supported annotation of texts (see this volume pp. 17–30). Working digitally means that the categories must be predefined in advance, and be both clear and compact enough for the team to be able to quickly proceed with annotation and vast and flexible enough to be able to provide for coding all possible aspects. Finally, Cristina Vertan presented the first steps towards building the digital Ethiopic lexicon (in particular, the root tool,<sup>3</sup> the automatic pattern-based lexical generator, and

1 European Research Council Advanced Grant, grant agreement 322849. For an introduction on the project see also A. Bausi, ‘TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages’, in A. Bausi, A. Gori, D. Nosenitsin, and E. Sokolinski, eds, *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies. Proceedings of the International Conference Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: the Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa, Hamburg, 17–19 July 2014*, Supplement to *Aethiopica*, 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 11–13.

2 See the Introduction by A. Bausi below for more on the specific challenges faced.

3 See also C. Vertan, ‘Towards a digital lexicon of Ethiopic: the TraCES experience’,

the GeTa tool for morphological annotation; see this volume pp. 31–41). In addition, at the end of the conference, a workshop was offered providing the attendants with a first hands-on experience with the beta version of the tool.

The second conference panel, chaired by David Appleyard, was dedicated to a comparative survey of dictionaries, both historical and recent. In his talk ‘Beyond Dillmann’s *Lexicon* – Towards digital lexicography: Lessons from Syriac’, Andreas Ellwardt (Universität Hamburg, *TraCES* project) compared the recent attempt to update a historical dictionary of the Syriac language to what has been happening in Gəʿəz lexicography, and to what has been planned by the project *TraCES* (see this volume pp. 185–199). Bruk Abdu (Capuchin Franciscan Research Center, Addis Ababa), read a paper on ‘Dillmann’s *Lexicon* and Kidane Weld Kifle’s *Dictionary*: A comparative study of selected Gəʿəz words’ (not in this volume). Bruk Abdu showed how the Ethiopian scholar Kidanä Wäld Kəfle was inspired by Dillmann’s work in producing his Gəʿəz–Amharic dictionary (edited by Dässta Täklä Wäld as *Mäṣḥafä säwasəw*), and how on multiple occasions he expanded and modified the word list, the definitions, and references as compared to Dillmann. Another study dealing with (so far unpublished) dictionaries of Ethiopic was presented by Manfred Kropp during the following, third panel.

The third panel, dedicated to Historical linguistics and lexicography was chaired by Stefan Weninger. The first part was dedicated to language contact and lexical borrowings. It was opened by Serge Frantsouzoff’s (St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts) presentation ‘Sabaic loanwords in Gəʿəz and borrowings from Gəʿəz in Middle Sabaic’ (see this volume pp. 141–147). Frantouzoff convincingly demonstrated that a part of Gəʿəz basic vocabulary was borrowed from South Arabian during the proto-Aksumite and early Aksumite period. Moreover, the Aksumite ambitions in Yemen during the second and third centuries CE seem to have resulted in some Ethiopic words penetrating Sabaic vocabulary. In his paper ‘Irrational nasal infix as indication of Semitic loanwords borrowed in their Greek form’ (see this volume pp. 151–176), Agostino Soldati (Milan, now Rome, Sapienza University) showed that the influence of the Greek language upon Classical Ethiopic may go well beyond what has been traditionally assumed. Some of the terms that were believed to be borrowed from other languages such as Hebrew most probably entered Gəʿəz from Greek, as certain linguistic features suggest. Finally, Martin Heide (Philipps-Universität-Marburg) focused on Arabic influences,

in A. Bausi, A. Gori, D. Nosnitsin, and E. Sokolinski, eds, *Essays in Ethiopian Manuscript Studies. Proceedings of the International Conference Manuscripts and Texts, Languages and Contexts: the Transmission of Knowledge in the Horn of Africa, Hamburg, 17–19 July 2014*, Supplement to *Aethiopia*, 4 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015), 14–16.

introducing ‘New Gəʿəz word forms from Arabic-Ethiopic translation literature’ which he encountered while working on the critical edition of the *Life* and the *Definitions* of Secundus (see this volume pp. 173–181). In addition to suggesting additions to a future dictionary of Gəʿəz, he could also show how a close study of the Arabic *Vorlage* can assist in correct understanding of the Ethiopic version. Finally, Manfred Kropp (Mainz) presented his ongoing research on the lexicographical *Nachlass* of two eminent scholars in his talk entitled ‘Abraham Johannes Drewes’ Glossar zum *Recueil des inscriptions de l’Éthiopie antique* und Sergew Hable Selassies Fragment eines Gəʿəz-Belegstellenlexikons’ (see this volume pp. 201–217). Unfortunately, both Drewes and Sergew died before they could complete their work; numerous handwritten cards and notes remain. Manfred Kropp has been studying the records in the hope of bringing them to publication, at least partially. The records of Drewes are particularly interesting as they present a rare case of a specialized glossary dedicated to a particular field of research. Sergew, on the other hand, collected numerous examples going beyond what was offered by Dillmann and later by Kidanä Wäld Kəfle. Processing these materials according to the modern state of the art in lexicography, and in digital humanities, is a challenge and a multi-year research project.

Other challenges and trends in Gəʿəz lexicography were discussed during the fourth conference panel, chaired by Serge Frantsouzoff. Stefan Weninger (Phillips-Universität Marburg) focused on ‘The use of Arabic in Gəʿəz Lexicography: From Dillmann to Leslau and beyond’ (see this volume, pp. 219–231). He focused on how Arabic etymologies and cognates were treated by Dillmann and Leslau in their work and demonstrated that a special attention is necessary when recurring to Arabic dictionaries. ‘Some problems of transcribing Gəʿəz’ were the topic of the presentation of Maria Bulakh (Moscow, Russian State University for the Humanities; see this volume pp. 103–137). Her contribution offered a survey of various transcription and transliteration approaches. She argued that the data of traditional pronunciation (such as epenthesis of ə after a syllable-final guttural) should be critically evaluated before it can be taken over into scholarly transcription. Finally, Maija Priess (Universität Hamburg) introduced her recent ‘Lexicon of Gəʿəz Verbs for Students’ (not in this volume), in which she collected a number of verbs (including derived and multi-radical ones) supplied with paradigms in Perfect, Imperfect, and Jussive, as a help tool for those interested in learning Gəʿəz.

The conference was completed by a lengthy discussion, in which the main desiderata of Ethiopic lexicography were highlighted. The most important one—creating a digital lexicon linked to a text corpus—is indeed the main scope of the project *TraCES*, which was behind the conference.

The edited volume somewhat changes the arrangement of the papers. Some of the oral papers could not be selected for publication, and some have been considerably revised before acquiring their present written shape.

As is always the case with papers presented at a conference, the volume can offer but a fragmentary view on the complex field. The synthesis of the problems, inspired by the discussions during the conference and after, is provided in the Introduction by A. Bausi.

In the first chapters, papers focusing on the general research in Gəʿəz linguistics have been collected. They include a presentation of the work of the *TraCES* project (E. Sokolinski) as well as surveys on Gəʿəz morphology (S. Hummel and W. Dickhut), editorial practice (A. Bausi, the only paper not originally presented during the conference), transcription and transliteration (M. Bulakh), and digital humanities applied to the study of Gəʿəz (C. Vertan).

The second chapter, with papers by S. Frantsouzoff, A. Soldati, and M. Heide, focuses on the various issues associated with language contact, whether loanwords or translation practice.

Finally, in the third chapter specific issues of lexicography are in the focus, such as the history of Gəʿəz lexicography in the view of recent developments, also in the field of Syriac studies (A. Ellwardt), the unfinished lexicographic work of Drewes and Sergew Hable Selassie for Ethiopic (M. Kropp), and, finally, Arabic cognates and etymologies in dictionaries of Gəʿəz (S. Weinger).

Eugenia Sokolinski

150 Years after Dillmann's *Lexicon*:  
Perspectives and Challenges of  
Gə'əz Studies

## Introduction

### 150 Years After Dillmann's *Lexicon*

ALESSANDRO BAUSI, Universität Hamburg

The present volume contains the proceedings of the international conference ‘150 Years After Dillmann's *Lexicon*: Perspectives and Challenges of Gəʿəz Lexicography’ organized by the team of the project *TraCES – From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages*,<sup>1</sup> and held at the Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg, on 16 and 17 October 2015. The intention was that of commemorating a remarkable anniversary. In 2015, precisely 150 years had elapsed since the publication of August Dillmann's *Lexicon* in 1865.<sup>2</sup> In his preface to this monument of Ethiopian and oriental studies, completed in June 1864, Dillmann mentioned seven years of continuous and uninterrupted work (‘per septennium omnibus fere horis subsecivis’), including four years of ceaseless corrections (‘In corrigendis schedulis per quadriennium multam consumsimus operam’). The work on the *Lexicon* thus immediately followed the publication of the first edition of the *Grammatik der äthiopischen Sprache* in 1857,<sup>3</sup> which the *Lexicon* under many respects completes and complements. These seven years were deemed reasonable by Dillmann to combine a substantial progress in Gəʿəz lexicography, even without attaining the ideal of a *thesaurus*, with the goal of a feasible task within a manageable period of time.

150 years was also roughly the period that, as mentioned by Dillmann (‘plus centum et quinquaginta annos’), had elapsed by 1865 since the publication of the immediate forerunner of the *Lexicon*, namely the *Lexicon aethiopico-latinum* by Hiob Ludolf, the second revised edition of which was published in 1699 (first edition in 1661) and served as the only reference tool for Gəʿəz lexicography until the nineteenth century.

In the 1950s, several attempts followed in Dillmann's footsteps—and reflected what Dillmann himself had planned and foreseen, ‘nostro thesaurō facile posthac adjiciamus vel adjiciant viri harum literarum periti qui in posterum sunt futuri’—but did not significantly change the general framework: one can mention Sylvain Grébaud's *Supplément* published in 1952,

1 Funded by the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme, grant agreement 322849.

2 Dillmann 1865. The Gəʿəz-Latin ‘Glossarium’ in his *Chrestomathia*, however, should also be remembered, since this offered for decades and still offers to many the real first experience with a lexicon of Ethiopic, see Dillmann 1866, 159–291.

3 Dillmann 1857.

Gabriele da Maggiora's *Vocabolario* in 1953, or even Kəflä Giyorgis, Kidanä Wäld Kəfle, and Dässta Täklä Wäld's *Mäṣḥafä säwasəw* in 1955/1956.<sup>4</sup> It was only Wolf Leslau's *Comparative dictionary of Ge'ez (Classical Ethiopic)* in 1987<sup>5</sup> that marked a real step forward in Gə'əz lexicography. Yet, Leslau's dictionary had a focus on comparative linguistics and programmatically disregarded references to texts, manuscripts, and even inscriptions, not to say of aspects of style, lexical development, and phraseology.

\*

While convening this workshop, we had two goals in mind. On the one hand, we thought worthwhile to commemorate the anniversary of Dillmann's *Lexicon*, focussing on its significance and importance within its context and beyond, with a look at Dillmann's gigantic contribution.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, the workshop was aimed to precise—besides the obvious task of updating it in terms of new lemmata and references—which are the real challenges, expectations and crucial choices posed by manuscripts, texts, and epigraphic evidence which have since emerged with regard to Gə'əz lexicography. We hoped to get ideas for further research and reflections on the broad scholarly impact of Dillmann's *Lexicon* under several points of view: from the use of standardization 'according to Dillmann' in text editions, also implying questions of lexicon and morphology, to the rarely applied analysis of lexical and stylistic choices as a way of appreciating and understanding the making of Ethiopic literature throughout its development, to the possible use of Dillmann's *Lexicon* for bringing Gə'əz into the digital age—which is the most ambitious goal of the project *TraCES*. Within the limits of a small scholarly community and in the time allowed for by a conference it was not possible to approach all questions, yet the discussion was vivid and inspired further directions of research, either of a general or of a more focused character.

4 Grébaud 1952; Gabriele da Maggiora 1953; Kəflä Giyorgis, Kidanä Wäld Kəfle, and Dässta Täklä Wäld 1955/1956. For all these, see Cohen 1964, Getatchew Haile 1987, and the exhaustive presentation in Leslau 1991. Felice Israel has studied the attempts carried out by Štefan Kožančič, a learned priest from Gorizia, who compiled an unpublished lexicon of Gə'əz in 1858, now preserved in Gorizia, Seminario, Ms a 58 (Israel 2014).

5 Leslau 1987; based on this is his concise lexicon, Leslau 1990. On Leslau's lexicographical activity see Uhlig 1989, Ricci 1990, Goldenberg 1992, and Kropp 2005.

6 The real dimension of the scholar and orientalist also emerges from the two recent dense essays dedicated to him in a large collection of orientalist portraits, see Tubach 2014 and Güterbock 2014.

\*

Within the scope of a short preface, I will briefly touch upon three points.

(1) The first point is the idea itself of a digital lexicon of Gəʿəz texts. While reading the informative profile of Ernst Hammerschmidt recently written by Veronika Six for a thick book of 2014 where tens of profiles of scholars in Christian Oriental studies are penned by various contributors, I learnt that an 'English Dillmann', and even more than that, was definitely already an idea of Hammerschmidt, although he was not able to accomplish it:

Etliche Gedanken bzw. Projekte wurden/werden von seinen Nachfolgern und den nachwachsenden Generationen weitergeführt, einige davon allerdings, wie z.B. die von ihm angesprochene Notwendigkeit der Übertragung des in Latein verfassten August Dillmannschen Lexikons etwa in die englische Sprache, sind bis jetzt nie in Angriff genommen worden. [...] Ob je ein Wissenschaftler sich dieser Mühe unterziehen würde und notwendigerweise damit auch die in dem Lexikon seit dem Erscheinen des Lexikons im Jahre 1865 (Leipzig) noch nicht erfassten Beispiele und Belegstellen einzuarbeiten, ist fraglich. Das von Hammerschmidt formulierte Desideratum steht weiter im Raum. Doch es scheint, dass seit dem Jahr 2014 am Hamburger Institut ein in diese Richtung deutendes Projekt (TRACES) im Entstehen begriffen ist.<sup>7</sup>

(1a) Disregarding for the moment the question of which must be the role played by the existing Dillmann's *Lexicon* or by a digitized, if not digital, version of it, or even of its English version *towards the realization of a real digital lexicon*—which is a futile question as far as we accept that we always start *from the present state of the art* and *from what we have*, because feasibility and sustainability are strong preconditions of every scientific enterprise—I would also like to remind that one of the earliest attempts at a real work in digital philology and humanities applied to Ethiopian studies was proposed earlier than twenty years ago by Manfred Kropp with great clarity.<sup>8</sup>

His 'Thesaurus Linguae Aethiopicae' launched at Mainz University, Seminar für Orientkunde,<sup>9</sup> although still partially rooted in the pre-Unicode era, comprised a few texts, among which the *Sər'ata gəbər* and a feudal deed ('Die Lehensurkunde für die Kirche von Däräsge'), several links—in the way we have tried to have on a more comprehensive basis on the *TraCES* web site—,

7 Six 2014, 1062.

8 A recent project, also in Hamburg, is to be mentioned particularly with regard to manuscript studies, 'Beta maṣāḥəft: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea' ('Schriftkultur des christlichen Äthiopiens und Eritreas: Eine multimediale Forschungsumgebung'), see the project website: <<https://www.betamasaheft.uni-hamburg.de/>>.

9 <<http://www.uni-mainz.de/Organisationen/TLA/index.html>> (no more active on 19 October 2019); it was once linked with <<http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/indexd.htm>> where also the link is no more active (accessed on 20 October 2016).

a pioneering article on ‘Äthiopisch und der Computer’,<sup>10</sup> and an example of an Ethiopic annotated text (SGML in Classical Text Editor) with Unicode encoding. Still Kropp provided in 1994<sup>11</sup> a most important contribution, ‘From Manuscripts to the Computer: Ethiopic Studies in the Last 150 Years’, that anticipated in a way, among many things,<sup>12</sup> theme and title of the present workshop, and of which I will quote only one sentence, ‘Orientalists are more in need of organization and technical tools than related disciplines’,<sup>13</sup> that is a concern that also animated the networking programme *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies* (COMSt), coordinated from Hamburg in the last years.<sup>14</sup>

(1b) Let me also remember the episode that is of some importance to the *TraCES* project: when working in Naples at the Istituto Universitario Orientale, later Università di Napoli ‘L’Orientale’, I started a small-scale project on a ‘New Lexicon of Ethiopic Texts’, that was very modestly and discontinuously funded for some years, between 2000 and 2007 within the framework of a joint programme with Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO).<sup>15</sup> It was carried out mostly with my personal efforts, and additional contribution from a few students from the University of Naples ‘L’Orientale’, like Vitagrazia Pisani, now a member of the *TraCES* project, but also researchers from abroad, like Andreas Ellwardt, also a member of the *TraCES* project.<sup>16</sup> During this time it was possible to produce a preliminary digital Unicode recovery of Dillmann’s *Lexicon*. The *Lexicon* was digitised through a very primitive procedure, mainly by retyping it, yet also re-arranged in a way that references and quotations were standardized and made consistently searchable. Some 65% of the core part of the *Lexicon* was covered, excluding the etymological sections, and mostly also the extremely numerous Greek words

10 Kropp 1992a.

11 Kropp 1994.

12 For example, on digital palaeography, see also Kropp 1992b, 265–266.

13 Kropp 1994, 131.

14 For the *COMSt* project, see the *COMSt* handbook and its website: <<https://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/en/comst/>> (accessed on 19 October 2016).

15 <[http://cta.iuo.it/HomePages/albausi/Home-P\\_UNO.htm](http://cta.iuo.it/HomePages/albausi/Home-P_UNO.htm)> (accessed 19 October 2016) with materials only partially available online.

16 I would like to remember the names of all the students who contributed to larger or minor extent to the digitization of Dillmann’s *Lexicon* during my years in Naples: Raffaele Iervoglino, Chiara Lombardi, Daniela Pezzella, Monica Pezzella, Vitagrazia Pisani, Irene Roticiani, Arianna Sacco, and Luisa Terminiello. Very substantial contribution to the accomplishment of the work was eventually provided by Irene Roticiani and integrations and corrections were eventually carried out during the *TraCES* project by Joachim Braun and Wolfgang Dickhut, the latter also a member of the project at present; Andreas Ellwardt is still working on further corrections.

and passages, for which I could rarely avail myself of qualified students for typing them. At the same time, aside from any project framework, I tried to collect a digitized corpus of Ethiopic texts according to Unicode standard using elementary tools (macros and simple devices to convert texts in several formats to Unicode-based texts), and also published in 2006, as far as I know, the first critical edition of an Ethiopic text (after first attempts by Kropp) layouted with the Classical Text Editor software.<sup>17</sup> I dare say that, with all the limits, primitive as this digitized lexicon and text collection were, it has proved to be extremely useful and can be compared to the first steps carried out in other much more developed domains.<sup>18</sup>

(2) My second remark concerns Dillmann's *Lexicon* emblematic character for what I would call the 'Latin divide', that is, a dichotomy we are experiencing in Gə'əz and Ethiopian studies, which is in turn only one aspect of other divides, for example as far as accessibility of literature in languages other than English are concerned. This 'divide' is one side of the strange polarity that at its opposite has the theoretical and technical questions of digital humanities and development of machine readable data.

Dillmann's *Lexicon* has accompanied and still accompanies the daily work of many scholars and researchers of the earlier and present generation. At this point we have to admit that in our time even good scholars in Gə'əz studies have no more, or very limited, access to works in Latin and classical studies in general, because they come from the background of African studies, from a marginal European scholarly tradition, or non-European scholarly tradition. This lack of access remains a lacuna that is detrimental to the quality of their work. The Latin language still allows access not only to Dillmann's *Lexicon*, but also to so many and important contributions in linguistics, historical research, manuscript studies, that it can still be considered a precondition for many aspects of classical Ethiopian studies as well as general Humanities—not at all marginal for our field. We will not do a favour, even to our younger Ethiopian colleagues, whom we try to support in all possible ways, if we deny this point. This is in a way in keeping with the *verbum* that animated the work at the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica*, with so much effort invested—beyond the rhetoric of *the new, innovative, and interdisciplinary*—on how to preserve correctly an *uninterrupted bibliographical chain* in our studies. This bibliography, however, must not only be registered, stored, and transmitted, but also be accessed and used.

All this said, we must also recognize that as far as the negative consequences of the lack of access are concerned, the case of Dillmann's *Lexicon* is really

17 Bausi and Gori 2006. For the Classical Text Editor see <<http://cte.oeaw.ac.at/>> (accessed 24 October 2016).

18 Kropp 1994, 125.

an extreme one. The clear perception of this enormity gives impulse to work seriously and with full determination on a non-Latin (or non-exclusively Latin), properly digital, and widely accessible lexicon of Gəʕəz.

(3) My third remark concerns the *TraCES* team. As it has already appeared in these years, while our working structure presupposes a high level of competence, it also implies very close interaction between the members of the team, which also entails some unavoidable sacrifice and additional effort. I am aware of the challenges posed by this project structure—usual for cooperative enterprises, as it was earlier at the Hiob Ludolf Centre for the *Encyclopaedia Aethiopica* as well as for the ERC-project *Ethio-SPaRe: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia. Salvation, Preservation, Research*<sup>19</sup>—which is necessary if a project attempts at a really cooperative work beyond the cluster of individual sub-projects. I would like therefore to extend once more my warmest and grateful thanks to the people involved in *TraCES*, also hoping that this experience is not only a challenge, but also a rich human and scholarly experience.

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