

## Manuscripts and texts, languages and contexts: the transmission of knowledge in the Horn of Africa

Hamburg, July 17-20, 2014

### Call for Papers

The conference is jointly organized by three EU-funded projects in Ethiopian Studies. For the project *Ethio-SPARE: Cultural Heritage of Christian Ethiopia* (ERC Starting Grant, Hamburg, 2009-2014), dealing with recording and cataloguing manuscripts preserved in ecclesiastic libraries primarily in the North Ethiopian Highlands, this is the major closing conference. For the projects *TraCES: From Translation to Creation: Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (ERC Advanced Grant, Hamburg, 2014-2019), dealing mainly with Ge'ez written heritage and *IslHornAfr: Islam in the Horn of Africa, A Comparative Literary Approach* (ERC Advanced Grant, Florence, 2013-2018), dealing with the Islamic manuscript tradition of Ethiopia and the Horn, this is a launching event.

The organizers would like to welcome scholars basing their research on the direct work with Ethiopian manuscripts and written sources to join in the academic discussion.

The conference shall be organized into four thematic panels: *Palaeography and Codicology* (Chair: D. Nosnitsin); *Ge'ez Philology and Language* (Chair: A. Bausi); *History and Historical Geography* (Chair: D. Nosnitsin); *Islamic Tradition: Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts* (Chair: A. Gori).

#### Panels and topics

The papers in the *Palaeography and Codicology* section are expected to centre on the analysis of the physical aspects of Ethiopian manuscripts. Such issues as layout, decoration, writing styles, but also the reconstruction of provenance, scriptoria or historical libraries are of primary interest. Case studies on manuscript preservation and/or material analysis methods are also welcome.

The panel on the *Philology and Language* would like to address in the first place the earliest strata of Ge'ez literature. Papers dealing with the reconstruction and the history of texts – also in the sense of the borrowings and/or transfer of literary motifs – shall be in the centre of academic discussion. Besides discussing little known textual problems, the organizers would invite, on this occasion, to revisit the issues of such complex and multi-layered texts as the *Kebra Nagast* or the *Miracles of Mary*. An additional issue shall be the developments

in the style and lexicon of the Ge'ez language as it may be reflected in the texts from different periods.

The *History and Historical Geography* panel welcomes contributions centring on the use of manuscripts for reconstructing Ethiopian cultural landscape of the past. Not only the major works but also, and even more so, the many additional texts or notes can assist in establishing the relationships that once existed between persons, places or regions. These may have been occasional or systematic. Revealing these historical links is the purpose of the discussion.

The final panel, *Islamic Tradition*, welcomes scholars dealing in their research with the manuscripts written or used by the Muslims of Ethiopia. These may be in Arabic or in other languages (written in Arabic script). The actual texts transmitted in these manuscripts, their themes and distribution, are of primary interest. Codicological or historical issues shall also be considered.

### **Conference format**

Papers of 30 minutes shall be followed by a 15 minutes discussion.

An additional poster session shall be planned for young researchers wishing to introduce their planned, on-going or completed projects (10 minutes per poster presentation).

A general discussion shall complete the conference.

### **Travel subsidies**

A limited number of travel grants shall be available for scholars from Ethiopia as well as for students and researchers at early stages of their career. Should you be interested in a travel grant please contact the conference organizers at [aethiopistik@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:aethiopistik@uni-hamburg.de)

### **Submission and registration**

The interested participants are asked to submit the title and the abstract of 150 to 300 words by December 31, 2013. Please specify the panel of your choice and/or whether you would like to present a poster.

### **Conference organizers:**

Alessandro Bausi, [alessandro.bausi@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:alessandro.bausi@uni-hamburg.de)

Denis Nosnitsin, [nosnitsin@yahoo.com](mailto:nosnitsin@yahoo.com)

Alessandro Gori, [alessandro.gori@unifi.it](mailto:alessandro.gori@unifi.it)

