



## BACKGROUND

Ethiopia is one of the countries with the most ancient Christian history, and the only country in Africa where Christianity became official religion as early as in the 4th century A.D. It is also one of the very few African regions where the history has been documented in written sources: manuscripts in possession of ca. 600 monasteries and 20,000 churches, some of which date back to early Middle Ages, have been estimated to number dozens of thousands.

Only a minor part of these archives have so far received scholarly evaluation, only less than one tenth of manuscripts have been microfilmed or digitalized, and only those that have come in possession of European libraries have been duly catalogued and are well protected. A great part of this unique heritage is on the verge of extinction, and urgent action needs to be taken to save it from complete disappearance.



## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- identify the most important monastic libraries and archives
- create inventories and shelflists
- protect and create digital copies of the most precious witnesses
- analyse and classify the types of texts
- create searchable databases that will allow quantitative and qualitative research into Ethiopian literature
- create virtual manuscript libraries
- create interactive CD Roms for most important collections
- catalogue manuscripts according to modern requirements

- critically edit the most important texts
- publish and analyse a number of witnesses
- perform research into the literary history
- perform research into oral traditions
- widely disseminate ongoing research results



## ACTIVITIES

The running period of the ETHIO-SPARE project is 5 years, from December 2009 to November 2014.

Its main activities include:

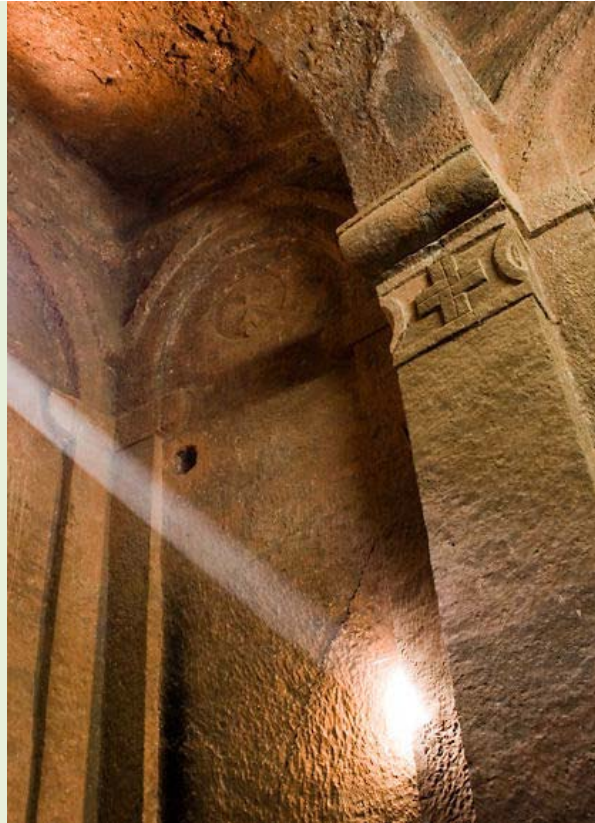
- ongoing research into philology (including digital philology) and history
- field missions in Ethiopia
- instruction missions in Ethiopia
- regular workshops and conferences
- international exchange
- formation of young researchers

## TEAM

The project is headed by Dr. Denis Nosnitsin.

The project team includes three research assistants and two Ph.D. students.

Additionally, field assistants, technical assistants, book conservation specialists, IT advisors and students are actively involved in the project.



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ERC STARTING GRANT



**ETHIO-SPARE**

**CULTURAL HERITAGE OF CHRISTIAN  
ETHIOPIA: SALVATION, PRESERVATION,  
RESEARCH**

