The Ethio-SPaRe project has successfully consolidated an international and multidisciplinary ambitious research team. It established good working relations with the Ethiopian partner organizations, local church and state authorities, and achieved its main goals of discovering, recording, and studying historical ecclesiastic libraries, ensuring the digital preservation of their possessions. A database for the description of the libraries and their collections has been developed, and the bulk of collected data has been analysed. At least three regions were identified as areas of greater importance for the Ethiopian history and manuscript culture (poorly known before): the area between the monastery of Däbrä Dammo and the town of Addigrat (Late Aksumite and early medieval sites), the area north of Mekelle bordering on Tämben (18th-19th cent. history), a part of Gulo Mäkäda adjacent to its north-eastern corner (mediaeval / Aksumite time, and 17th-19th centuries). Over 100 sites have been visited; of them, several (e.g. Däbrä Ma'so, Däbrä Zäyt, Qeta Maryam, Me'esar Gwihiila, Addi Qolqual, Däbri Giyorgis, Mangas Maryam) had been unknown or barely known to the academic world. For the first time, all sites have been mapped with the help of a GPS device, allowing a new state of the art in the cartography of ecclesiastic Ethiopia. Particularly endangered sites have been carefully measured and modelled (3D) in order to ensure their preservation (at least digitally) for the next generations.

C. 2,000 mostly unknown manuscripts and dozens of valuable paraphernalia have been recorded during the eight field seasons. Besides high-resolution digital mirror reflex camera, macro lens and digital microscopic imaging have been applied to allow for a new level of codicological analysis. The images are now available for researchers at the local partner organizations (Tigray Tourism and Culture Agency; Dioceses of East and South Tigray). The team has made observations on the presence of non-manuscript historical heritage; took probes of oral history; conducted interviews with local connoisseurs of history and scribes; and recorded church buildings and art items, elucidating the historical landscapes.

Over 1,000 manuscripts have been catalogued and included into the online database for manuscripts. Of them, more than 100 have been carefully studied by project members for their publications. Interlinked with it, the database for ecclesiastical archives incorporated metadata on all sites visited by the team, and the database for art object includes structured descriptions and
photographs of over 130 art items.
The project's interdisciplinary dimension included cooperation of natural scientists (ink analysis), restorers (book conservation of endangered manuscripts), art historians (analysis of paraphernalia and manuscript illuminations), cartographers (GIS mapping), archaeologists (archaeological surveys, measurements and 3D modelling).

Storage facilities of seven local libraries were significantly improved. Members of the relevant Ethiopian church and state authorities participated in the missions and got intensive training in detecting and registering the cultural treasures of Ethiopia. Cooperation and information exchange with several ongoing research projects contributed to both the study of the most important historical sites and their promotion as potential tourist attractions.

The results have been presented on several occasions to academic and non-academic community. A series of publications by the project team members illustrates a number of findings. Four international workshops were organized by the Ethio-SPaRe project. These have provided additional impetus to the discussion about Ethiopian pre-modern history and written culture. The topics that were reviewed in the light of large amount of previously unknown materials included: the scope of the so-called Ewostatean and Stephanite movements, the true meaning of the "monastic networks" in the course of history and Ethiopian realities, and their role in the manuscript culture (2011; proceedings published in 2013); the circulation and social function of the Ethiopian hagiographic writing (2012; proceedings published in 2015), the "secondary life" of manuscripts (2013), the methods of study and conservation of manuscripts (2014). The final conference, organized jointly with two other ERC projects in July 2014, illustrated well how a number of scholars from outside the project have been successfully using project data in their research (proceedings to appear in 2015).

For further details please visit http://www1.uni-hamburg.de/ethiostudies/ETHIOSPARE.