



Technische Universität Dresden
Faculty of Linguistics, Literature and Cultural Studies
D-01062 Dresden

Prof. Dr. Erhard Hinrichs,
Spokesperson Text+
Leibniz-Institut für Deutsche Sprache
R-5, 6-13

D-68161 Mannheim

Prof. Dr.
Alexander Lasch
Dean of Studies

Phone
+49 351 463 36175
Fax
+49 351 463 37723
Email
alexander.lasch@tu-dresden.de

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Letter of Intent

GGSG supports the *Text+* Initiative

The international *Association for German Language History (Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprachgeschichte - GGSG)*, founded in 2008, is dedicated to the advancement of research on the diachronic development of the German language. According to its constitution, its main aim is supporting Germanic language history in research and teaching and to increase its visibility in the public. Furthermore, it aims at fostering collaboration between researchers working on German language history from different perspectives and in different scientific paradigms. Its activities include an annual conference on specific research topics as well as the biannual presentation of an award for the best PhD thesis in German historical linguistics ("Peter von Polenz-Preis").

Digital resources play an increasingly important role in the investigation of German language history for various reasons. Firstly, any investigation of historical stages of a language crucially relies on (written) language data. While painstaking manual analyses of language data have generated important insights that have laid the foundation not only for research on the history of German, but also for historical linguistics in general, recent research has shown that large-scale quantitative studies can contribute substantially to our understanding of phenomena of language change. In particular, the availability of large-scale annotated historical corpora allows for addressing diachronic research questions that could not be tackled on a solid empirical basis before. Secondly, like many branches within linguistics, research on German language history is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, which entails that the scope of possible research questions is extended substantially. For instance, research questions on the interface of semiotics,

linguistics, and grammarology can be conceived of, taking the material aspect of written language as well as the inherently multimodal nature of written communication into account. The availability of high-resolution digital facsimiles of historical texts can contribute to a significant extent to such lines of research. In addition, these resources can play a key role in teaching as well, especially given the increasing importance of digital education in the current situation.

The GGSG decidedly embraces the *Text+ Initiative* and is willing to contribute to the development of the portfolio of data and services outlined in the letter of intent submitted by the *Text+ Consortium*. Given the expertise of many GGSG members in areas such as historical corpus linguistics, historical lexicography, text linguistics, dialectology, palaeography, and many other areas related to the Digital Humanities, we can contribute to developing the digital research infrastructure envisaged by the *Text+ Initiative*. In particular, we could add important considerations to the development of best-practice strategies for interoperability, taking the specific requirements of the non-standard data types that are typical of historical language data into account.

We are willing to play an active part in the governance of the *Text+ Initiative*. The advisory board of the GGSG has already set up a working group (led by Stefan Hartmann and Jessica Nowak) whose task is to coordinate the communication between the *Initiative* and the more than 150 members of the GGSG. They have already declared their willingness to participate in the *Initiative's* committees.

The GGSG is already actively promoting young talent and organizes consulting and training events, e.g. workshops on statistics for linguistics or on palaeography at the association's annual conference (which will take place in a virtual format for the first time this year). It is desirable to coordinate the activities of the *Text+ Initiative* and GGSG. For instance, we would like to represent the *Initiative* at different venues such as workshops or conferences related to German language history. Various formats are conceivable, e.g. organizing theme sessions at conferences, workshops for doctoral students, and so forth. This could also help to establish tighter networks between researchers from different subdisciplines of linguistics and foster the exchange between researchers working with different data types. This enables an exchange that will lead to new strategic and professional cooperations in the future. Measures to improve mutual visibility could already be directly implemented today. Examples include cross-references to websites and blogs, advertising for event formats on blogs and microblogs or the documentation of events in social networks, among other things.

As Association for German Language History, we support the *Text+ Initiative* and look forward to a good cooperation. With best regards and wishes for the success of the *Text+ Initiative*



Alexander Lasch
First chairman of the board