ÖAW

**AUSTRIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

# WARES, TYPES AND FABRICS.

## THE UPPER EGYPT CONTRIBUTION TO LCP

### N. HIGH-STESKAL, L. REMBART, H. SCHWAIGER, S. LADSTÄTTER

## 1. INITIAL SITUATION

The excavations in Syene and Elephantine (modern Aswan) in Upper Egypt conducted as part of an FWF-project (P23866-G18) from 2011-2015 in cooperation with the Swiss Institute in Cairo led to the discovery of an exceptionally large number of pottery fragments. The large quantity enabled us to gain greater insight into the commercial and social life of the inhabitants of Syene than expected, however, it forced us to rethink our long-term data management plans as well as our publication strategy. Due to the economic importance of Syene as an ancient pottery production center with trade connections to the Mediterranean, our data is of interest to a broad range of scholars.



**Pottery from the excavations in Aswan**

## 2. CHALLENGES

The raw data, including images and drawings documenting 16,000 pottery fragments, is accessible through two out-of-date databases raising issues of long-term accessibility. The data was recorded by a variety of authors leading to slight inconsistencies in terminology and was written in German. Furthermore, the large dataset made it impossible for us to publish the entire material in a traditional print publication.

## 3. SOLUTIONS

We decided to fully integrate our data into an already established online database, the Levantine Ceramics Project (LCP; www.levantineceramics.org). The LCP application, an international initiative developed by scholars at Boston University, uses the Ruby on Rails framework. It has a comprehensive test suite using RSpec, with the front-end a combination of HTML, CSS, jQuery, and Javascript. The database is PostgreSQL, and the Rails framework interfaces with the database using ActiveRecord. The version control system is Git and the code is publicly available on Github. The LCP also takes on the function of a long-term data repository and is already an established research tool for pottery data of the Eastern Mediterranean.



**Sample of an individual data sheet on the LCP**

We developed a carefully designed workflow: currently, we are harmonizing the data from the two databases, i.e. clarifying the organization of the data, as well as creating a concept-based controlled vocabulary in both German and English. The controlled vocabulary is necessary in order to standardize the terminology and descriptors used in our German dataset and improve the discoverability and comparability of the individual datasets. Furthermore, the vocabulary will be uploaded to SDL Trados Multiterm 2017 and in a semi-automated process using SDL Trados Studio 2017 the data will be translated into English before it is uploaded to the LCP.

## 4. RECYCLING PROJECT ELEMENTS

Our decision to make our data openly accessible through an online database brought about several unintended benefits: our data will now become accessible to more people, including individuals with poor access to libraries or print publications.

In addition, our controlled vocabulary will be integrated into a larger multi-lingual archaeology thesaurus and at the same time the concept structure of the thesaurus will also be reused in the design of an archaeology database and its dropdown menus.
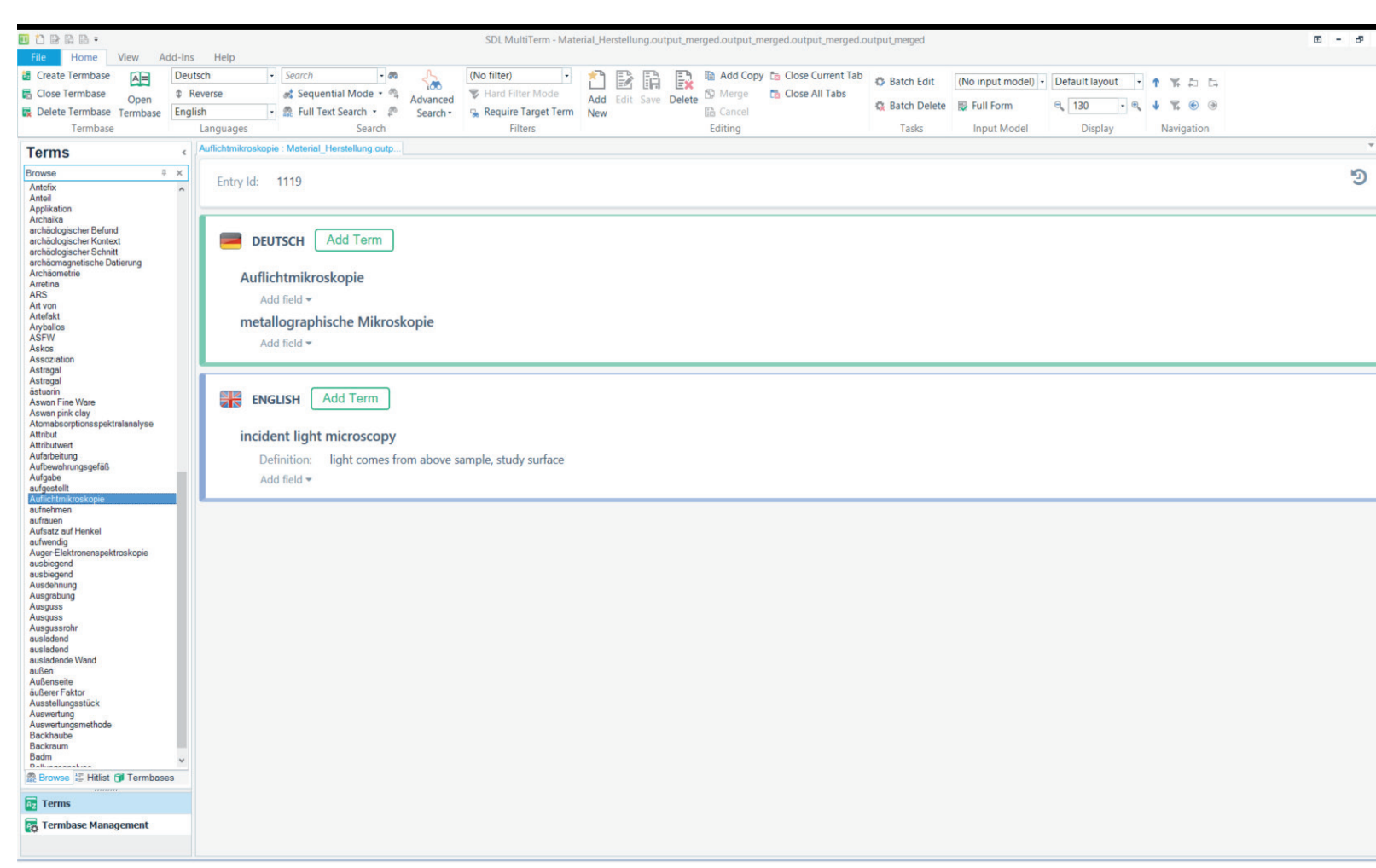


**The controlled vocabulary adapted to MultTerm for semi-automated translation (SDL Trados 2017)**

FWF
**Der Wissenschaftsfonds.**

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

FÜR ÄGYPTISCHE BAUFORSCHUNG UND ALTERTUMS KUNDE IN KAIRO
SCHWEIZERISCHES INSTITUT

ÖAI

nicole.high-steskal@oeai.at | laura.rembart@oeai.at | helmut.schwaiger@oeai.at | sabine.ladstaetter@oeai.at
Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut | Franz Klein-Gasse 1, 1190 Wien | www.oeai.at