



WEIGHTS AND MERCHANTS

THE TECHNOLOGY OF EARLY TRADE
INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
GÖTTINGEN
MAY 15th–17th 2019



Mobility and the exchange of ideas and goods between human beings is a prerequisite for technological and cultural development. Once merchants were present, such specialists have shared a common set of problems: they had to plan and execute commercial expeditions, calculate risks, costs, and potential profit, and assess and convert the material value of one good into another. This workshop investigates concrete historical cases of how such problems were addressed in a multicultural and diachronic perspective. Focus is on the tools and infrastructure of trade. By comparing technologies and infrastructure of trade from the Bronze Age to the Early Modern period in Eurasia and Africa, we seek to identify general and particular taxonomies and aspects of such technologies, and to define exemplary tool-kits of traders through time and space.

Lorenz Rahmstorf, Introduction to the Workshop (Seminar für Ur- und Frühgesch., 2nd floor, May 15th, 14:30-18:00)

Session 1: The Bronze Age in Western Asia and Europe

Piotr Steinkeller (Harvard), The Mechanics of Long-Distance Trade in the Third-Millennium Greater Mesopotamia: The Case of Ebla

Gojko Barjamovic (Harvard), Merchants, Trade and Infrastructure in Middle Bronze Age Western Asia

Vasant Shinde (Pune), Impact of Trade on the Society and Economy of the Harappan Civilization of South Asia

Anthony Harding (Exeter), Commodities and Traders in Bronze Age Europe

Session 2: The Bronze Age and Classical Antiquity (Thursday, May 16th, 9:00-12:30)

Claude Mordant, Rebecca Peake, Malfalda Roscio (Dijon), Weighing Systems, Metallurgy and Mobility: Weighing Equipment in Late Bronze Age Graves in the Seine and Yonne Valleys (France)

Nicola Ialongo (Göttingen), From Chiefs to Merchants. Negotiating Free Entrepreneurship in Pre-literate Bronze Age Europe

Philip de Souza (Dublin), Imposing and Negotiating Standard Weights and Measures in Classical Antiquity: A (Post-) Brexit Perspective

Rodney Ast (Heidelberg), Officials, Merchants, and Agents. The Organization of Roman Trade Along the Red-Sea Route

Session 3: The Medieval Period in Northern Europe (Thursday, May 16th, 14:00-17:30)

Christoph Kilger (Visby), What Viking Merchants had in mind - Exploring Weighing Practices and Weight Standards within Early Medieval Trading Networks

Carsten Jahnke (Copenhagen), Trade in Different Worlds. The Trade between Russia and Western Europe from 900 to the Time of the Hanseatic League

Felix Rösch (Göttingen), The Technology of the Medieval Maritime Trade

Natascha Mehler (Vienna), How Foreign Merchants Adapted to Local Trade Mechanisms in Iceland: Coinless Exchange at the Margins of the Known World (c. 900-1600)

Session 4: The Medieval and Early Modern period in Asia, the Mediterranean and Africa (Friday, May 17th, 09:00-13:00)

Elizabeth Lambourn (Leicester), Yemen in the „India Trade“ of the 12th Century: Weights and Measures in the Geniza's „India Book“

Georg Christ (Manchester), Sifting, Weighing, Packing – Micro Mechanics of the Pepper Trade in Mamluk Alexandria

Jonathan Walz (Zanzibar), Rethinking the Socio-economic Intersections of Pre-colonial Africa and its Swahili Coast

Interested colleagues & students are welcome but please mail to lorenz.rahmstorf@uni-goettingen.de if you like to attend. For additional information please visit <https://www.uni-goettingen.de/de/forschung/110918.html>

