Editorial

The Cluster of Excellence ROOTS is off and running after the start of the new year!

In the last few months, the various subclusters, research platforms, and the ROOTS Reflective Turn Forum have all laid the groundwork for their ambitious research plans. New talent has been recruited. Doctoral candidates, postdoctoral research associates, and other researchers have arrived in Kiel, bringing new insights and perspectives that will help to enrich ROOTS endeavours for the understanding of past human-environmental dynamics. In this first phase, one focus of the cluster has been building the foundation for the strong collaborative spirit that will be needed to successfully carry out the cluster’s interdisciplinary research agenda in the next years. The retreat in Sandbjerg Gods (Denmark) in 2019 allowed old and new members to get to know each other and share research ideas and priorities. Each individual and research unit presented their research perspective. This productive time together enabled us to think creatively about how to tackle our next goals. The subsequent retreat in June 2020 will build on these connections in order to address the overarching themes of the cluster. Furthermore, at the upcoming retreat in June, the presence of the members of the advisory board of ROOTS will give us the opportunity to present the results of the first phase of the project as well as to fine tune the aims, methods, and perspectives of our cluster. Looking forward, we are all eager to continue to contribute to the results of ROOTS research on past human-environmental connectivity: stay tuned for more updates on the ROOTS website and on this newsletter in the coming months!

Johannes Müller, Speaker of ROOTS

The new logo of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS!

Since October 2019, the new logo of ROOTS accompanies all activities and events conducted in the framework of ROOTS, thus helping to expand the visibility of the interdisciplinary research of the Cluster of Excellence. The logo was created by Tine Pape, the graphic designer of ROOTS, in coordination with the Communication Platform, with the aim to offer a recognisable sign that captures the goals of the research conducted within the cluster, and in particular its relevance in the exploration of past socio-environmental dynamics to understand current challenges and crises.
**Archaeology as a theme of the Night of Science 2019**

Archaeology beyond Indiana Jones and Lara Croft was the main theme of the actions presented by members of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS together with researchers of the Johanna Mestorf Academy, the Institute for Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology and the Institute for Classical Studies at the Schleswig-Holstein “Night of Science 2019”. The events were held in Preetz and offered hands-on experience about archaeological research to the visitors. For example, participants had the opportunity to both shape and produce their own pottery vessels with Neolithic pots as a reference and to practice drawing prehistoric potsherds. The interactive activities dealing with pollen analysis and crop plant identification as well as a 3D ceramic puzzle also attracted the attention of the numerous visitors. Moreover, talks and a poster exhibition were presented on the topic “Formation of the environment – formation of social interaction”. The themes ranged from ancient house renovations in Pompeii to environmental influences and from prehistoric gender roles to the history of crops in prehistoric periods. The positive feedback of the visitors motivates us to participate in the next Night of Science on 25 September, 2020. We look forward to meeting you there!

![Participants in the Schleswig-Holstein “Night of Science 2019” reconstruct a Bronze Age vessel with a 3D ceramic puzzle.](image)

![Participants in the Schleswig-Holstein “Night of Science 2019” produce their own pottery vessels under the guidance of the archaeologist Jutta Kneisel.](image)

**Johannes Müller, speaker of ROOTS, awarded with the 2019 Shanghai Archaeological Forum (SAF) Research Award**

The DFG Priority Program 1400 “Early Monumentality and Social Differentiation: On the origin and development of Neolithic large-scale buildings and the emergence of early complex societies in Northern Central Europe,” was awarded the 2019 Shanghai Archaeological Forum (SAF) Research Award for the category “Research”. The coordinator of the project, Johannes Müller, speaker of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS, was honoured at the SAF ceremony on 14 December, 2019 in Shanghai, where he also presented the research results of the study on the monumentality phenomenon in Europe during the 5th and 4th millennia BCE.

![The 2019 SAF Research Award ceremony (left) and Johannes Müller with the 2019 SAF Award (right).](image)
The first retreat of ROOTS

The first year of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS was intense, rich with activities and included the arrival of more than 20 new members, who joined the cluster. It was therefore time to gather for the first retreat of the cluster in order to foster further dialogue, generate fresh ideas, and therefore strengthen innovative interdisciplinary cooperation within the cluster. This retreat took place at Sandbjerg Gods, near the city of Sønderborg (Denmark) on 18 and 19 December, 2019. All members of the cluster, and in particular the PhD candidates and the research associates who started their work in the last few months, were invited to introduce themselves and their research projects. Further presentations illustrated the research agendas of the six subclusters, the Reflective Turn, as well as the three platforms and the Young Academy. Talks presented the progress of the projects that already started in 2019 and the perspectives for 2020 and the following years. In addition to the formal presentations, participants discussed possibilities for the realisation of pilot projects integrating different disciplinary approaches, for example, by combining the study of ancient literary sources and biological studies for investigations on the emergence and spread of diseases, or by analysing cultural material products with cutting-edge equipment of material science to understand how knowledge was produced and transmitted.

Furthermore, a short excursion along the western shore of the Als Sund Fjord with a visit to the site of Nydam Mose and other additional activities offered further opportunities for exchange.

**Link:**
**People in ROOTS: Chiara Thumiger**

"My field of research engages with ancient medicine and science, and, in particular, I am interested in exploring the history and narratives of human health and illness. I have worked on ancient medical ideas about the relationship between the body and the soul, bodily and mental/spiritual health and mental disorder.

In Kiel, I will conduct a project on "Ancient Guts", investigating ancient views about nutritional processes in a broad cultural historical perspective. My project will range from food consumption to digestion and excretion, from dietetics to eating disorders, from metaphorical 'resources' to the portrayal of human anatomy, and to economic aspects of eating as a fundamental aspect of human relations with the environment."

**Link:**

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**People in ROOTS: Professor Matthias Renz**

*The Reconstruction of Ancient Cultures*

"My research lies at the intersection between computer science and archaeology as well as geology, climate and marine sciences. I apply modern information technology to identify patterns, trends and relationships between objects in very large, sometimes unstructured and heterogeneous data collections, where spatial and spatiotemporal data play a crucial role. For example, by using computer-aided methods, complex processes of the past can be investigated to detect patterns of transformation in societies.

In the framework of the Cluster ROOTS, I am involved in the activities of the subcluster Hazards and Inequalities as well as with the Humanities Platform. The highly interdisciplinary setting of the cluster provides a stimulating environment and a multifaceted array of archives to test innovative methods of data science for the reconstruction of past human-environmental dynamics."

**VITA**

Matthias Renz, born in Munich, is professor for Archaeoinformatics – Data Science at Kiel University since 2018. Previously, he held positions as an Associate Professor for Data Science at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia (USA) and as a private lecturer at Ludwig-Maximilians University (LMU) Munich (Germany). He completed his doctorate in 2006 and his habilitation in 2011 at LMU Munich.
2019 ROOTS excavation at Hundisburg-Olbetal
– A fortified Bronze Age settlement

As part of the activities of the ROOTS subcluster ROOTS of Conflict: Competition and Conciliation, an archaeological excavation was conducted at the fortified Bronze Age settlement of Hundisburg-Olbetal (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany) in August 2019 under the direction of Maria Wunderlich and in cooperation with the State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology Saxony-Anhalt. The excavation focused on the exploration of the internal area of the settlement. Here, numerous pits were documented, and, in particular, large settlement pits, probably used for the disposal of waste, provided abundant material, including pottery, stone tools, animal bones and abundant botanical remains. These findings will support a detailed socio-economic reconstruction of the site. Preliminary observations indicate that the inner settlement dates to the Early Bronze Age (ca. 1500–1200 BCE). If confirmed by the 14C dates, this would match the dating of the surrounding ditch. The evaluation of the obtained dates will enable a deeper understanding of the Hundisburg-Olbetal settlement within the contexts of potential conflicts, as reflected in the fortification of this site.

ROOTS investigations at the Insula del Citarista (I 4), Pompeii

In the framework of the research of the ROOTS subcluster Urban ROOTS: Urban Agency and Perception, a small team led by the building archaeologist Tobias Busen, undertook a fieldwork campaign in Pompeii (Italy) in September and October 2019. The study focused on the investigation of the architectural remains of the insula I 4 (Insula del Citarista), a central block of the ancient city situated at the intersection of two of the main streets (Via Stabiana and Via dell’Abbondanza) and famous for its wall paintings and the bronze sculpture of the Apollo Citarista found during the excavations in 1853. The main activities of the 2019 building survey addressed the systematic collection of information on the building materials, building techniques, mortars and plasters, as well as finding evidence for the succession of the various building measures within the houses and shops of the insula. The results of this study will shed light on the forms of agency and perception in this urban setting.

LINK: www.cluster-roots.uni-kiel.de/en/projects-and-activities
**Projects and Activities**

**Lecture Series on past and contemporary urbanity**

Over the winter term 2019-2020, a lecture series titled “Bridging the Gap: Urbanity between Past and Present” was organized by Patric-Alexander Kreuz in the framework of the activities conducted by the subcluster Urban ROOTS. A series of eight lectures brought experts on the topic of urbanity to Kiel to discuss both historical and modern perspectives on the roots of contemporary urbanity in past societies. In each session, two talks followed by a panel discussion addressed and discussed various topics of historical and modern urbanity, including infrastructural challenges of urban communities, urban lifestyles, urban planning, as well as aspects of migration, housing or religion.


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**Retrospective:**

**Workshop “Quantifying Social Inequalities – New Proxies, New Methods. Possibilities and Limitations to Determine Social Inequalities in Archaeological Contexts”**

Organized by Ralph Großmann for the subcluster ROOTS of Inequalities, this workshop took place on 7 and 8 October, 2019 at Kiel University with the participation of nine invited speakers, who illustrated a range of different approaches for the study of social inequalities in past societies. From case studies on Bronze Age cemeteries in Europe to results of quantified settlement differences and economic transformation processes of the Maya in Belize, Central America, the workshop demonstrated the relevance of multi-proxy approaches as well as the importance of including not only economically based concepts but also alternative models that consider the “quality of life” in order to quantify social inequality.

Philosophy of Archaeology: A ROOTS Reflective Turn Forum Workshop

Those who would readily describe themselves as philosophers of archaeology are perhaps rather seldom. However, theoretical discussion flourishes in archaeology and anthropology under many parallel labels such as social or cultural, or gender theory. Moreover, empirical scientific investigations are always conducted within a philosophical set of assumptions or a paradigm.

Organised by Vesa Arponen and Konrad Ott for the ROOTS Reflective Turn Forum, this workshop invites an international and interdisciplinary cast of specialists to Kiel to discuss the role of philosophy and theory in archaeology. Within a broad, inclusive, and interdisciplinary definition of philosophy as the reflective and iterative process of conceptual clarification and paradigm critique, this workshop aims to obtain a view on the state of art in philosophy of archaeology. It is expected that contributions will address unresolved research problems in archaeological theory as well as focus on a concrete middle range theoretical import of philosophy to an archaeological interpretation of data.

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FURTHER INFORMATION:
www.cluster-roots.uni-kiel.de/en/projects-and-activities

Date: 20-21 February, 2020
Venue: Kiel University, Leibnizstr. 1, room 105a+b

Everyone who is interested in this topic is warmly welcomed to join the workshop.

Past Societies: Human Development in Landscapes

New edited volume by the Graduate School ‘Human Development in Landscapes’

This edited volume of the Kiel Graduate School ‘Human Development in Landscapes’ (GSHDL) initiative provides an overview of the research conducted by the GSHDL community on socio-environmental issues of past societies over the last 12 years. The first volume appeared in 2018 and covered crucial topics of the overall research agenda of the Graduate School. This second volume builds on that work to present the results of the investigations that doctoral candidates and post-doctoral researchers conducted in the framework of the GSHDL on questions specifically relating to past human-environment-social interactions. This offers a synthesis of the multi-faceted theories, concepts and practices on the study of past landscapes conducted in the framework of the GSHDL.

ISBN: 9789088909245
Events

**ROOTS Workshop – Philosophy of Archaeology**
20-21 February, 2020
Kiel University, Leibnizstr. 1, room 105 a+b
Workshop organized by: Vesa Arponen and Konrad Ott (ROOTS Reflective Turn Forum)

**Conference: “Medical Knowledge and its ‘Sitz im Leben’: Body and Horror in Antiquity”**
22-23 May, 2020
tba
International conference organised by: George Kazantzidis and Chiara Thumiger (subcluster: Knowledge ROOTS)

**Conference: “Mentale Konzepte der Stadt in Bild- und Textmedien der Vormoderne”**
11-13 June, 2020
tba
International conference organised by: Margit Dahm-Kruse and Timo Felber (subcluster: Urban ROOTS)

**Conference: „Religion and archive”**
9-11 September, 2020
IBZ - Kiellinie 5, 24105 Kiel
Conference organised by: Hilmar Klinkott (subcluster: Knowledge ROOTS)

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