Dear members of ROOTS, friends and colleagues,

The beginning of 2021, like the prior months, was punctuated by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. As we enter the summer season, we are encouraged by signs of hope that the pandemic may be abating. We continue to be grateful for the ongoing engagement, creativity and cooperation of all ROOTS colleagues.

This year, members of ROOTS have continued to progress in studying past social, environmental, and cultural connectivity. In spite of various limitations imposed by the pandemic, some field investigations have been carried out. In addition to other activities, members of ROOTS organised and attended numerous conferences, workshops, and meetings, which were held virtually. At the end of May, the 2021 ROOTS retreat took place, also in a virtual setting. With high attendance, the retreat focused on fostering interdisciplinary work among researchers and different research units of ROOTS. In particular, the meeting marked the further development of the ROOTS interlinkage groups, which bring together researchers from different specialties to focus on specific overarching topics. We expect that these groups will explore innovative approaches to study past human-environmental dynamics, taking on the major research questions that build the core of the cluster initiative.

Furthermore, the first volume of the newly established ROOTS Studies series, titled *Insights into Social Inequality – A Quantitative Study of Neolithic to Early Medieval Societies in Southwest Germany*, will appear in the next weeks. We look forward to seeing the subsequent volumes!

Over the last months, ROOTS welcomed new professors and members who started their work at Kiel University. Their contributions to ROOTS will be fundamental as they focus on interdisciplinary engagements across the ROOTS research units.

It is time to look ahead. This summer brings the possibility for many of us to go back to the field, where we will be able to collect original material from unexplored archives. We hope that everyone will return with renewed energy to work together on the thought-provoking discussions we have been having over the past months. The summer season will culminate with the 2021 EAA annual meeting, “Widening Horizons”, which will take place at the beginning of September. Furthermore, the “Social Archaeology and Climate Change” summit will take place as the first worldwide expert-round in this field. We look forward to seeing you in Kiel in the near future!

Johannes Müller, Speaker of ROOTS

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**Editorial**

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archäo:labor – let’s get digging

What did people of the Neolithic Age and the Bronze Age eat? Where did they live? What did their houses look like? Answers to these and many other questions can be found at the new Kiel Science Factory’s archäo:labor. This is a thematic laboratory for school children, run jointly by Kiel University and the Leibniz Institute for Science and Mathematics Education (IPN) in collaboration with the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS.

Located on the grounds of the Botanic Gardens at Kiel University, the concept of the archäo:labor is based on the results of the interdisciplinary initiative conducted in the framework of ROOTS. Among various modules, it offers a replica of an excavation site, filled with a series of finds. Here school pupils can use real archaeological equipment to discover, identify and document finds, including replica fragments of ceramic vessels, a fireplace filled with charred plant remains, as well as fabric remains of pieces of clothing worn by Bronze Age people who lived in an imaginary moorland. In the module on the environment, children can actively experience the analysis of pollen samples to reconstruct what the landscape looked like in the past and where houses were located. By conducting experiments on all finds, the school children are able to draw conclusions about the life of people who lived between 4100 and 500 BCE.

The current archäo:labor program is oriented towards fifth to seventh grade pupils. Further offers for higher grades are currently under development. After the limitations imposed by SARS-CoV-2, the official inauguration of the archäo:labor is now scheduled for August 2021. Please check the calendar on the ROOTS website for more details and the official announcement.

INFORMATION AND CONTACT:  
www.forschungs-werkstatt.de  
Dr. Katrin Schöps / info@forschungs-werkstatt.de
2021 ROOTS Retreat

The 2021 ROOTS retreat successfully took place in digital form on 27 and 28 May with the participation of more than 80 members of the cluster. The purpose of this meeting was to foster communication and collaboration between the research units by focusing on the overall research questions of the Cluster of Excellence ROOTS and, in particular, on the interlinkage groups. The retreat enabled the participants to initiate joint research and plan co-authored papers or other publications, including booklets on specific topics.

The next retreat of the Cluster is scheduled for 12-13 May 2022, including the participation of the Advisory Board.

The six interlinkage groups

By bundling expertise of researchers from the different subclusters, six interlinkage groups address overarching themes of past socio-cultural-environmental connectivities. The six current groups are defined as “Mobility and Migration”, “Routes and Networks”, “Resources and Economy”, “Ideology and Identity”, “Waste/Abfall”, and “Past-Past & Past-Present”. Additional themes might be identified and investigated as ROOTS progresses. Stay tuned for more developments of the interlinkage groups.
“As a geographer specialised in soil science and geoarchaeology, I am mainly interested in human-environment interactions, with a special focus on the human impact on soils and landscapes across various spatial and temporal scales. An important part of my research is to detect changes in soil properties caused by climate change and land use. Current issues include the deterioration of soil quality in areas used for farming, which could lead to desertification of what was once fertile land, and I am interested in demonstrating the extent to which this affected prehistoric societies. I investigate the impact of environmental factors on soils and how changes in soil properties are connected with the development, maintenance and even abandonment of settlement structures or inhabited areas. Spatially, my research is focused on the Eurasian loess landscapes and steppes, the Near East, and the African savannah.”

Ilja A. Seržant, born in Riga (Latvia), is a new ROOTS professor of Slavic linguistics at Kiel University with a focus on historical linguistics. Previously, he held post-doc positions at Leipzig University, Johannes-Gutenberg-University of Mainz, and Konstanz University. He completed two PhD degrees, one in general linguistics in 2012 at the University of Bergen, and one in Indo-European historical-comparative linguistics in 2014 at the University of Cologne, where he also obtained his habilitation in 2018.

Eileen Eckmeier, born in Neuss, is a new ROOTS professor of geoarchaeology and environmental risks at Kiel University. Previously, she was a professor of physical geography specialising in soil geography at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (LMU Munich). She completed her doctorate in 2007 at the University of Zurich.
**Stormy fieldwork on Hallig Hooge**

At the beginning of May 2021, members of the ROOTS Wadden Sea Project and colleagues from the DFG Rungholt-Project conducted a week of geophysical fieldwork on Hallig Hooge, one of the small tidal islands in the German North Frisian Wadden Sea. Inclement weather and vagaries of the tides partially hindered the field activities and once again proved that the Wadden Sea is a difficult landscape for research. In stormy conditions, waves of the North Sea crashed over the Hallig's low summer dike, and the team members could imagine the living conditions of the medieval settlers in a truly immersive experience.

Despite the challenging conditions, the team applied electromagnetic induction (EMI) and ground penetrating radar (GPR) to map an early medieval site, revealed as a rectangular elevation below the younger Hallig sediments. According to pottery finds, this could be one of the oldest settlements dating to the 8th/9th century CE, when settlers first had to react to rising water levels and frequent flooding by building terps. A first archaeological excavation on the site is scheduled for July 2021. Furthermore, the team continued last year’s prospections in the tidal flats surrounding Hallig Hooge, where it was possible to get a more precise picture of the dike structure associated with the peat quarries and parts of the terp. As the medieval settlement structures continue in several directions underneath the tidal flats, there is much more potential for further detailed prospections in this area.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**
Dr. Bente Majchczack / bmajchczack@roots.uni-kiel.de

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**Workshop “Public Participation in Archaeological Research: Opportunities and Limitations”**

Organised by the ROOTS Communication Platform, this workshop convened on 7-8 June with a group of scholars from Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the UK, and the USA to explore the potential for and limits of critical public participation in archaeology. During this two-day event, the participants inquired into innovative models and possibilities of public engagement with cultural heritage and archaeological projects. Papers and discussions ranged from research methods and aspects of research ethics, to funding schemes and practical partnerships in fieldwork. This workshop will offer a basis for a reflection of the realisation of an archaeological project with critical, engaged public participation in summer 2022 in Schleswig-Holstein.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**
Ilka Rau / ilka.rau@zbsa.eu
Organised by members of the Subcluster Urban ROOTS, this conference took place on 10-12 June and addressed the basic fact that the city was not only a component of the historical reality of pre-modernity, but also part of the fixed inventory of cultural knowledge and memory. The contributions were dedicated to mental concepts, i.e. notions, ideas or imaginings of the city, which appear across epochs in different discursive and visual representations. In an interdisciplinary exchange between specialists of German studies, theology, archaeology, history, and art history, mental concepts of the city were examined in different media formats, including city chronicles, secular painting, biblical texts, medieval city plans or courtly novels. Based on the diversity of the examined formats and hermeneutical confrontations, it became clear that the cultural ideas associated with the city and urbanity are not only shaped by historical specifics but also by supra-temporal constants. The media representations of the city only partly emerge from the historical conditions of urbanisation of their time of origin. They also refer to supra-temporal patterns, topoi, and concepts of meaning. In the course of the conference, it was also possible to unveil the mental roots of the social, historical, and cultural ideas of the city in recent societies, as modern media conceptualisations of the city often fall back on the same ideas, which are frequently rooted in antiquity and Christian traditions. We look forward to the publication of the proceedings of this conference in the ROOTS Studies series.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
JProf. Dr. Margit Dahm / dahm@germsem.uni-kiel.de

As part of the interdisciplinary research project “Gardens, Human Senses and Eudaimonia”, a workshop took place on May 12 to discuss gardens in ancient – especially Greco-Roman – cultures. Presentations and discussions focused on practices in the garden, garden plants that served therapeutic purposes, as well as ancient ideas of human well-being in the context of scents, floral decorations and other cultural goods based on garden products. Topics included plant imports, the ritual significance of floral wreaths, the value of body scents and the planning of sensory gardens. This juxtaposition created a multi-faceted impression of the importance of the garden and its products in the ancient Mediterranean region. The versatility of plants, their processing and use as well as the spatial perspective of trade routes and design elements opened up neglected perspectives on ancient gardens. The video of the workshop will soon be available on the ROOTS website.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
PD Dr. Chiara Thumiger / cthumiger@roots.uni-kiel.de and Dana Zentgraf / dzentgraf@roots.uni-kiel.de
The ROOTS Studies book series

The transfer of knowledge is a crucial objective of ROOTS. The new peer-reviewed ROOTS Studies book series presents scientific research proceedings from the implementation of individual and cross-disciplinary projects that address social, environmental, and cultural phenomena as well as processes of past human development in light of the key concept of “connectivity”. The results of specific research themes across various formats, including monographs, edited volumes and data collections, are the backbone of this new book series.

Insights into Social Inequality – A Quantitative Study of Neolithic to Early Medieval Societies in Southwest Germany

Social inequality is a subject of contemporary concern. Life capabilities and the access to resources vary significantly in rich and poor countries, between elites and others. Inequalities based on bioanthropological and non-bioanthropological causes are almost universal. Accordingly, inequality was also inherent in past societies and archaeologists have repeatedly examined it in archives such as burial grounds. The first volume of the ROOTS Studies series continues such studies by applying a new multi-proxy approach to explore social inequalities in selected past burial grounds in Southern Germany dated to the Early and Final Neolithic, the Early Bronze Age, the Early Iron Age and the Early Medieval period. In this book, Ralph Grossman identifies hierarchical and heterarchical inequalities within the burial ground contexts based on a multitude of different proxies, including variations in the distribution of grave goods, burial pit sizes, bioanthropological and isotope data, as well as spatial analyses of burial grounds. The results reveal social inequalities among and within genders and age cohorts in the respective cemeteries. This leads to the interpretation that the investigated sites differ in the respective degrees of inequality and power strategy modes.

Original publication:
**Events**

**European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) Annual Meeting**
8-11 September 2021
Virtual meeting
www.e-a-a.org/EAA2021

**12th International Meeting for Phytolith Research (IMPR) Conference**
8-11 September 2021
Virtual meeting

**Conference: “Boas Talks”**
18-21 November 2021
Kiel University (venue tba)

**Conference: “Medical Knowledge and its ‘Sitz im Leben’: Body and Horror in Antiquity”**
18-20 November 2021
Hybrid meeting at Kiel University (venue tba) and on zoom.

**2021 ROOTS Plenary Meeting and Christmas Party**
26 November 2021, from 3pm onwards
Kiel University (venue tba)

**Conference: “Inequalities in Supra-Regional Eurasian Exchange Networks (8000 – 2000 BP)”**
1-5 December 2021
Kiel University (venue tba)

Due to the current SARS-CoV-2 situation, our events might change. Please check our website for more information under www.cluster-roots.uni-kiel.de/en/calendar-events

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