Editorial

The last months brought a number of new challenges and rewards, whether in the field or in the lab. The war of the Russian government in Ukraine continues to deeply affect the people living in the region and the consequences of this war are felt worldwide. The conflict is also affecting many people within our research community. Some ROOTS members have strong scientific and personal ties with colleagues in Ukraine. Others conduct projects in Russia in cooperation with Russian colleagues. The war poses a number of challenges and we are working on solutions in order to continue our numerous successful cooperation projects. To this end, it was possible to strengthen an already well-established network of collaborations with partners in Ukraine during an official visit in Kyiv. We hope that the war will end soon.

During the past months, members of ROOTS organised conferences where they discussed past social, environmental, and cultural connectivity with experts from many fields. Efforts were devoted to increase the visibility of our cluster, also thanks to various public outreach initiatives. The ROOTS community continues to grow as well: a number of researchers recently joined the Cluster of Excellence here in Kiel. We warmly welcome the well-known US archaeologist Gary Feinman and his wife and research partner Linda Nicholas to Kiel. Gary Feinman holds the JMA chair for the coming months. Furthermore, a new cohort of eleven PhD candidates, who started their studies at Kiel University over the summer months, have joined our team. Their research topics address a range of questions related to the study of past social, environmental, and cultural connectivity from multifield research perspectives. Others have received prestigious awards for their doctoral research.

As we look forward to 2023, we also reflect on the growth of ROOTS over the past year. In the coming months, we anticipate welcoming many of you at the Kiel Conference entitled “Scales of Social, Environmental and Cultural Change in Past Societies”, which will take place in March next year. This event will bring researchers and experts together from across the world, creating exciting spaces of dialogue and exchange that will help spark new ideas and advance research.

We are now entering the crucial phase of ROOTS. After four years of intense research and activities, it is time to harvest the fruits of our work, particularly in light of our efforts to extend our cluster initiative after 2025. We hope that everyone stays healthy and that all research, field, lab and museum activities will successfully progress during the next months. We wish you all the best for the holiday season and have a good start in 2023!

Johannes Müller, Speaker of ROOTS
**Award for ROOTS PhD students from the International Society for Hunter-Gatherer Research**

Archaeological excavations classically provide information about material culture in the past. But what impact can they have on knowledge exchange and social learning within a present-day hunter-herder community in the Siberian taiga? This question is being investigated by ROOTS PhD candidates Morgan Windle and Tanja Schreiber. For their presentation “Collaborative Archaeology and the Reciprocity of Knowledge Transmission within a Sel’kup Community in Western Siberia” at the 13th Conference on Hunting and Gathering Societies (CHAGS13) in Dublin this summer, they received an award from the International Society for Hunter-Gatherer Research for the best student presentation.

In 2021, both researchers had participated in an expedition to the Sel’kup people, an Indigenous ethnic group in Western Siberia. This expedition was part of an ongoing project in the Dietary ROOTS subcluster, headed by the supervisor of the two students, Henny Piezonka, in collaboration with the Russian archaeologists Aleksandr Kenig, Khanty-Mansiysk, and Dr. Andrei Novikov, Novosibirsk, as well as the Indigenous Sel’kup partners.

**Congratulations on receiving the award!**

LINK: [www.ucd.ie/chags13/ CHAGS13](http://www.ucd.ie/chags13/ CHAGS13)

**Strengthened ties to Ukraine**

For many years, Ukraine has been an important partner for Kiel archaeology. To strengthen these ties despite the current threat by Russia’s military aggression, Johannes Müller visited the Ukrainian capital Kyiv in August. There he acted as a spokesperson of ROOTS and the CRC 1266 and as a representative of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA). He signed a new cooperation agreement between the Institute of Prehistoric and Protohistoric Archaeology of Kiel University and the Institute of Archaeology at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University and reaffirmed the existing cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. The latter cooperation has already existed for 10 years. Johannes Müller was the first Western European archaeologist to visit Kyiv since the start of the Ukrainian war.

“The new cooperation agreement and the continuation of the existing cooperation with two important institutions lay the foundation for further joint projects as soon as the war ends. In addition, we are adapting existing agreements to the current situation,” Johannes Müller points out.

LINK: [https://tinyurl.com/mv5n9e9d](https://tinyurl.com/mv5n9e9d)
We welcome Gary Feinman as new JMA-Chair

In early November, we welcomed the well-known US archaeologist Gary Feinman and his wife and research partner Linda Nicholas to Kiel. Gary Feinman is the holder of the JMA chair until the end of February. Feinman and Nicholas look forward to discussing new projects with Kiel colleagues and to planning joint activities.

Gary Feinman received his B.A. in Anthropology at the University of Michigan and received his Ph.D. in Anthropology from City University of New York-Graduate Center in 1980. In his scientific work, he has specialised in the study of complex human societies – how and why they arose, the different ways they were organised and changed over time, and how the economies of these ancient social formations were underpinned and interrelated with their political and social institutions.

Currently, Gary Feinman and Linda Nicholas both work for the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, where Feinman holds the position of MacArthur Curator of Mesoamerican, Central American, and East Asian Anthropology.

Geographically, one of the foci of both colleagues is the study of pre-Columbian political and economic relations in the Mexican state of Oaxaca. Since 1995, both also have been part of a collaborative team of North American and Chinese scholars studying the Late Neolithic through the Han period in Shandong, China.

Feinman is also the founding and contact co-editor of the Journal of Archaeological Research, which is the top-ranked journal based on Impact Factor in Archaeology and Anthropology. He also is an Editorial Board member of Human Ecology and Cross-Cultural Research. Feinman was elected as a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and received the Presidential Recognition Award from the Society for American Archaeology.

A public lecture with Gary Feinman will be announced separately.

A new PHD cohort with fresh projects and ideas is strengthening ROOTS research. We say welcome to:

Anna-Theres Andersen working on conflict in pre- and protohistoric societies, Sarah Bockmeyer working on the Funnel Beaker West Group, Henriette Brandt working on diet and mobility in the Carpathian Basin from 5500-4000 BCE, Stefania Fiori working on routes and knowledge transfer in the Southern Caucasus from the 4th-1st millennium BCE, Laurenz Hillmann working on carrying capacities in Europe, Darja Jonjic working on language diversification and historical migration patterns, Anne Krause working on recentoires of Oppian’s Halieutika, Anastasiia Kurgaeva working on soil degradation in the Eurasian steppe zone, Sara Mura working on Punic mortuary rituals, Gianluca Ricci working on Ancient Greek supranational identity, and Florian Schwake working on Hellenic sanctuaries, Fiona Walker-Friedrichs working on interfaces of technology in early metal-bearing societies, and Katharina Zerzeropulos working on Imperial Roman economics.
Jharkhand –
A fascinating linguistic laboratory

How does linguistic diversity influence conflicts in modern India? ROOTS PhD student Ariba Hidayet Khan is researching this topic using the example of tribal communities in the central eastern Indian state of Jharkhand. During a field trip last summer, she collected valuable data for her linguistic studies.

Jharkhand is still a very young political entity: it only separated from neighbouring Bihar in the year 2000. One of its characteristics is the high percentage of tribal communities. Since their traditional languages hinder social advancement in India’s hierarchical society, fewer and fewer young people use them. In the last few decades, the introduction of the lingua franca, Sadri, into educational institutions made it polished and formal. This academic language has received a new name, Nagpuri, which is now becoming a marker of distinction between the tribal and non-tribal population. Even within the tribes, there are great differences as to whether or not their language serves as a factor of identification. "For questions about social inequalities, giving rise to linguistic and political conflicts, Jharkhand is an interesting linguistic laboratory," says Ariba Khan, who is currently evaluating the results of her fieldwork.

[Link: https://tinyurl.com/4upyyzky]

Gird-i Dasht:
A deep Late Chalcolithic stratigraphy

The Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in northern Iraq is an important study area for research into the human past. However, the political situation has hindered archaeological work for decades. It is only in the last years that researchers from abroad have had opportunities to work there again. From October to early November, a German-Norwegian-Swedish-Kurdish team led by ROOTS member Tim Kerig, in close cooperation with scientists from Soran University and the General Directorate for Antiquities responsible for the region, investigated Gird-i Dasht, the principal tell on the Delizian Plain. As part of the joint ‘From Mound to Cave’, project, they opened two trenches and documented horizontally parallel layers, including steeply sloping, metre-thick ash layers and continuous fire horizons. Preliminary investigations suggest that the team has encountered largely undisturbed layers of the Late Chalcolithic phases (LC) 3-5 and (LC) 1-2. There are indications that there are still at least 10 m of older stratigraphy underneath. As soon as they are analysed, several hundreds of ceramic and lithic finds as well as radiocarbon dates will allow a more detailed view on the settlement dynamics in this part of Kurdistan.

**ROOTS researchers study the Late Neolithic settlement of Opovo (Serbia)**

This year, archaeologists from ROOTS, in cooperation with the National Museum in Pančevo and the Museum of Vojvodina in Novi Sad, investigated the Late Neolithic site of Opovo (Serbia). They brought to light the almost complete settlement map of Opovo. The site is a multi-phase settlement of the Vinča culture. Old 14C dates place Opovo into the period from 4860 – 4780 cal BC.

Excavations in the 1980s revealed some differences in Opovo compared to the then known settlements of the Vinča culture. These features led to the interpretation of Opovo as a trading site of provincial nature with a strong adaptation to its environment.

In spring 2022, the investigators conducted intensive geomagnetic prospections in order to document the structure of the site. The new data shows a network of ditches that enclose an area of 9 ha with more than 100 houses. Based on this settlement plan and within the framework of the subcluster “ROOTS of Inequalities”, a drilling prospection was carried out in October that extracted organic material from different settlement areas. Dating and analyses are currently being carried out and results are expected for mid-2023.

**Link:** [https://tinyurl.com/ek6t3a4k](https://tinyurl.com/ek6t3a4k)

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**Living with the flood: How did people settle on the marshes in the Middle Ages?**

How do geophysical methods, such as seismics, geomagnetics or electromagnetic induction (EMI), reveal settlement structures of the past? A total of 25 students from the universities of Ghent, Vienna and Bratislava were able to learn this in August and September on the Eiderstedt Peninsula in Schleswig-Holstein. There, they took part in a joint research and training campaign, including the Institute of Geosciences at Kiel University and the Universities of Ghent, Vienna and Bratislava. The fieldwork was funded by the Erasmus+ programme and supported by the ROOTS Wadden Sea Project.

The work focused on the more than 1500-year-old dwelling mound Tofting on the southeastern edge of the Eiderstedt Marsh, as well as on the approximately 800-year-old dwelling mound row of Stolthusen. The investigations covered two important phases of settlement on the North Sea coast. In addition to the educational aspect, the results excellently complement the ROOTS research on sunken settlements in the present-day Wadden Sea. At the same time, the Institute of Geosciences’ Direct Push system, funded by ROOTS, completed its first successful scientific deployment during the campaign.

**Link:** [https://tinyurl.com/2frjnhsf](https://tinyurl.com/2frjnhsf)

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For more information on fieldwork and activities, please visit the ROOTS website at www.cluster-roots.uni-kiel.de/en/fieldwork-and-activities
**Workshop shows the significance of dark earth as an archive**

As part of the overarching interdisciplinary ROOTS project ‘3DARK DEPTH’, the “Anthropogenic Dark Earth Colloquium” (ADEC) took place in Kiel and Hedeby in October. The term ‘anthropogenic dark earth’ describes dark-coloured anthropogenic soils that are found in various contexts. Nevertheless, a full understanding of the phenomenon is still lacking. On the initiative of Jens Schneeweiß, Eileen Eckmeier and Paweł Cembrzyński (all Cluster ROOTS), the colloquium brought together leading specialists from ten countries and from different disciplines to document the current state of international research, to develop the research and to formulate common standards on the analyses of dark earth.

Within the hybrid-held colloquium, the researchers discussed case studies from different temporal and spatial contexts, exchanged research results and linked up with other experts.

**Public lecture and a panel discussion with bestselling author David Wengrow**

Are complex societies necessarily characterised by social inequality as common developmental models of human history claim? British archaeologist David Wengrow and the late U.S. anthropologist David Graeber answer this question with a clear “no” in their 2021 bestseller *The Dawn of Everything*. On 30 June, David Wengrow was a guest at Kiel University. In a panel discussion with Henny Piezonka, Berit Eriksen, Tim Kerig, René Ohlrau, and Artur Ribeiro, Wengrow discussed various topics that arose from the intersection of the book and their respective research.

After the panel discussion, he gave a lecture in the extended framework of the Cluster ROOTS/CRC 1266 Biweekly colloquium on “Slavery and its rejection among foragers on the Pacific coast of North America”.

David Wengrow is currently professor of comparative archaeology at University College London. His co-au-

thor, David Graeber, who died shortly after completing the book in late 2020, was a cultural anthropologist and most recently taught at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He was also considered one of the leading figures in the Occupy Wall Street movement.

**LINK:** [https://tinyurl.com/5fyvjnbk](https://tinyurl.com/5fyvjnbk)

**LINK:** [www.wissenschaftzukunft-kiel.de/festival-der-wissenschaft/science-day](www.wissenschaftzukunft-kiel.de/festival-der-wissenschaft/science-day)
Podcast: ROOTS excellently explained

Does a high population density increase violence among humans? When did humans begin to change their environment? An episode of the podcast “Exzellent erklärt” ("Excellently explained"), published this summer, introduces the research of the Cluster ROOTS.

In order to comprehend the complex topics of ROOTS, podcaster Larissa Vassilian spoke with ROOTS spokesperson Johannes Müller. He points out that some controversially discussed topics of our time are not as new as they sometimes seem. Humans also already changed their environment thousands of years ago, and migration has always existed.

In the further course of the podcast episode, anthropologist Katharina Fuchs explains some of the methods that are used to research the aforementioned questions. Human bones, for example, can reveal a lot about living conditions and also about migration routes of past societies.

“Exzellent erklärt” regularly introduces one of the clusters of excellence that are funded as part of the Excellence Strategy of the German federal and state governments.

The full episode is available at https://exzellent-erklärt.podigee.io or on all popular podcast platforms.

ROOTS at Kiel Science Day

Yasmin Dannath, Lisa Shindo and Benjamin Claaßen explain to Science Day visitors how plant science and archaeology belong together.

How does plant science contribute to an understanding of past human societies?

On 30 September during the Science Day in the Kiel region, ROOTS members Benjamin Claaßen and Lisa Shindo presented hands-on activities where visitors could not only learn a lot about plants and their role in archaeological research but also experience how research transcends disciplinary boundaries. Their presentation was part of a joint booth of the Kiel Plant Center and ROOTS in the Mensa I of Kiel University. During the seven-hour event, many visitors took the opportunity to learn about dendrochronology and plant diseases.

Additionally, as part of the Meet-a-Scientist programme activity at the Seeburg on Kiel Fjord, Jutta Kneisel answered questions about archaeology in general. The Science Day was the highlight of Schleswig-Holstein’s largest science event, the Festival of Science. As another event in the week before the Science Day, school classes could already “rent-a-scientist” for lessons. For this activity, ROOTS was represented by the doctoral student Per-Ole Pohl, who presented his work to two school classes immediately after the actual festival.

We thank everyone who was involved for their efforts and time in conveying ROOTS topics to the public.

LINK: www.wissenschaftzukunft-kiel.de/festival-der-wissenschaft/
## Upcoming Events

### Biweekly Colloquia:
*From the existing to the new. How creativity shapes the future – Joanna Sofaer, University of Southampton*

- 16 January 2023 / 04:15 to 05:45 p.m.
  - Leibnizstraße 1, R. 204

### Lecture Series:
*Grenzen (in) der Stadt*

- 07:15 to 8:45 p.m.
  - Wilhelm-Selig-Platz 3 / Raum 9 / 24118 Kiel

#### Talk 1
- 09 January 2023 / Jan Bemmann
  - “Grenzen, Barrieren und Kontaktzonen im Layout zweier Städte des Mongolischen Reiches”

#### Talk 2
- 16 January 2023 / Barbara Borg
  - “Rom: Auf der Suche nach Grenzen und Abgrenzungen in einer grenzenlosen Stadt”

#### Talk 3
- 23 January 2023 / Benjamin Schliesser
  - “Jenseits des Lokalitätsprinzips. Zur sozialen Formierung der Christusgruppen am Beispiel Korinths”

#### Talk 4
- 30 January 2023 / Konrad Ottenheym

#### Talk 5
- 06 February 2023 / Emiliano Urcioli
  - “The Homeworker, the Hustler, the Custom Inspector, and the Bee. Typologies of Boundary-Making in the Citification of Christ Religion”

### Amber – a Connector of Knowledge and Societies

- 23-25 February 2023, from 12:00 a.m.

### Kiel Conference
*Scales of Social, Environmental & Culture Change in Past Societies*

- 13-18 March 2023
  - Kiel University, Leibnizstraße 1

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For more events and updates, visit our website [www.cluster-roots.org](http://www.cluster-roots.org) or follow us on Twitter [https://twitter.com/clusterroots](https://twitter.com/clusterroots) or on Mastodon [https://fediscience.org/@clusterroots](https://fediscience.org/@clusterroots)