

Why are some things valuable while others are not?
How much effort does it take to produce certain valuable objects? How can the different appreciation of certain things in different time horizons and in different cultures be explained?

Over the past nine years, the Research Training Group “Value and Equivalence” has investigated the ways in which value is linked to material things. From anthropology and archaeology, case studies with very different answers to the introductory questions had been found in the course of this time. We assigned them to the research fields (I) Production and Transformation, (II) Circulation and Genesis, and (III) Market and Trade in Goods. One of the common results is the finding that it is rarely the value of the material itself that matters for high valuation, but rather the appreciation of the origin of certain objects or their connection with certain social structures. Value arises through social action, whereby it is always necessary to ask anew, which actors are interested in the value of certain objects (or in their appreciation), or which actors dispute seemingly objective values.

The conference will present results from the RTG as well as insights from international guests, and will demonstrate different forms of generation or maintenance of value. Arranged according to the thematic fields mentioned, the anthropological and archaeological case studies deal with the manifold links between objects, substances or places and the associated social structures.

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VALUE AND EQUIVALENCE

09 — 10
May 2019

International Conference on
the Genesis and Transformation
of Values from an Archaeological
and Anthropological Perspective



Thursday 9 May

- 11:00 Registration and Welcome Coffee
- 12:00 Manfred Schubert-Zsilavec
(Vice President of Goethe University Frankfurt)
Greetings

Section I – Transformation of Value

- 12:10 Hans Peter Hahn (Goethe University Frankfurt,
Spokesperson of the Research Training Group
Value and Equivalence)
Introduction: What is the Value of Things?
- 12:40 John Chapman (Durham University)
Place-value in European Prehistory
- 13:10 Lunch
- 14:30 Rüdiger Krause (Goethe University Frankfurt)
On the Transformation of Values in Bronze Age
Europe
- 15:00 Federico Buccellati (Humboldt University of Berlin)
Learning new Styles, Quickly: On the Impact of
Political and Cultural Changes on Material Culture
- 15:30 Kat Szabó (University Melbourne)
Commodity, Curation, Heirloom:
Object Biographies and Longevity in Western
Island Melanesian Shell Money in Museum
Collections
- 16:00 Coffee
- 16:30 Norbert Franken
(Johann Gutenberg University Mainz)
„From old to new!“ The Phenomenon of
‘Upcycling’ of Antique Bronzes

Section II – Genesis of Value

- 17:00 Detlef Gronenborn
(Roman-Germanic Central Museum Mainz)
Age of Jade – Age of Copper. The Emergence
of Institutionalized Surplus on European Societies
- 19:00 Conference Dinner

Friday 10 May

- 9:30 Susanna Harris (University of Glasgow)
The Allure of Worldly Things: Textiles
and Value in Iron Age Italy
- 10:00 Michael Erdrich (Maria Curie-Skłodowska
University Lublin)
Considerations on the Organization of Amber
Trade in the Central European Barbaricum
during the Pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age
- 10:30 Mario Schmidt (University of Cologne)
Between Nothing and a Handful of Fresh Water
Sardines – How Western Kenyans Value and
are Valued by Monetary Quantities in a
Behavioral Economic Experiment
- 11:00 Coffee

Section III Markets and Actors

- 11:30 Eric Arnould (University of Southern Denmark)
Distinction and Value Creation in Consumer
Communities
- 12:00 Vitali Bartash (Ludwig Maximilian University
Munich)
The Value of Work – The Origin of the Labour
Market in Ancient Mesopotamia (3rd Millennium
BC)
- 12:30 Guido Sprenger (Heidelberg University)
Expecting Gifts and Commodities. A Future-
Oriented Approach to Classifying Transactions
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Phillip Grimberg (Friedrich Alexander University
Erlangen-Nürnberg)
Investigating Antiquity – Collecting,
Antiquarianism, and Archaeology in China
- 14:30 Thomas Richter (Goethe University Frankfurt)
On the Formation and Negotiation of Prices in
the Old Babylonian Period (about 2000-1600 BC)
- 15:00 Martin Hensler (Technoseum Mannheim)
Knowledge – Use – Value. Approximation to the
Value of Objects through the Instructions for Use
- 15:30 Coffee
- 16:00 Claus Deimel, Manfred Eggert and
Bertram Schefold (Advisory Board of the Research
Training Group Value and Equivalence)
Closing Remarks
- 17:00 Farewell Drinks