

Commodities and the  
History of their Entangle-  
ments in East Central and  
Eastern Europe



Leibniz Institute for  
the History and Culture  
of Eastern Europe

**6–8 July 2022**

**GWZO Annual Conference**

Stoffe, Güter, Waren. Zur  
Verflechtungsgeschichte  
des östlichen Europa

# Commodities and the History of their Entanglements in East Central and Eastern Europe

Societies are shaped by the materials they use. Extraction, production, refinement and circulation of commodities determine human settlement, the allocation of resources, and the building of infrastructures and institutions. Global, environmental and economic history have taken basic materials like cotton, silver and copper, fossil fuels like coal and oil, or foodstuffs like grain, tea, coffee and sugar as a starting point for examining transformations of society. East Central and Eastern Europe, however, remain rather marginalized in most of these studies. The annual conference of the GWZO addresses this gap and looks at transregional and global entanglements of the region from the early Middle Ages to the 21st century - through the prism of a history of commodities.



Cotton Spinning Mill Leipzig, 21 February 1952, Processing of Cotton from the Soviet Union. Author: Illner, Source: Bundesarchiv



Neryungrinsky coal mine (Republic of Sakha, Russian Federation).  
Author: Institut Ekonomiki i upravlenija v promyshlennosti,  
Source: WikiCommons



»Gruss von der Leipziger Messe. Die Petersstrasse während der Messe. Brühl«, Cutting from Postcard, Leipzig 1909,  
Source: WikiCommons



Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia, Picture 14th century,  
Source: WikiCommons

# Wednesday, 6 July 2022

**16:30**

**Welcome:** Maren Röger (Director GWZO)

**Introduction:** Lucie Dušková, Timm Schönfelder and Jan Zofka (GWZO)

**17:00–18:45 Grain**

Chair: Katja Castryck-Naumann (GWZO)

Martin Bauch/Undine Ott (GWZO): Getreide vom Schwarzen Meer: Die Integration osteuropäischer Anbauggebiete in den mediterranen Fernhandel mit Grundnahrungsmitteln im Spätmittelalter

Uwe Müller (GWZO): Weizen aus Osteuropa in der Weltwirtschaft um 1900

Jörg Gertel (Universität Leipzig): Ukrainisches Getreide aus der Perspektive Nordafrikas

Comment: Florian Riedler (Universität Leipzig)

18:45 Reception

# Thursday, 7 July 2022

**9:00–10:45 Energy and Industrialisation**

Chair: Aurelia Ohlendorf (GWZO)

Martin Bemann (Universität Freiburg): Between Resource Curse and Economic Development: The Wood Based Industries of the Northern Carpathians and the Industrialisation of Europe, c. 1850–1950

Felix Rehschuh (Universität Stuttgart): The Flow of Soviet Oil in the Early Cold War

Stephen Fortescue (UNSW Sydney) (via zoom): What Are the Implications of Western Sanctions for the Russian Coal Export Strategy?

Comment: Guido Hausmann (IOS, Regensburg)

10:45–11:00 Coffee break

**11:00–12:45 Luxury consumption goods**

Chair: Alena Janatková (GWZO)

Lutz Häfner (Universität Bielefeld): Wein, Weinbau und Kellerwirtschaft im Zarenreich und der frühen UdSSR

Niklas Platzer (GS OSES, Regensburg): (K)ein süßer Wettstreit? Kolonial- und Rübenzucker in Österreich-Ungarn im 19. Jahrhundert

Anne Dietrich (Universität Leipzig): Coffee in the Cold War. The GDR's Joint Ventures with Socialist Ethiopia, Laos and Vietnam

Comment: Jennifer Altehenger (Oxford University) (via zoom)

12:45–14:00 Lunch break

**14:00–15:45 Metals**

Chair: Lucie Dušková (GWZO)

Roman Zaoral (Charles University Prague): The Silver Trade and Cultural Exchange between the Czech Lands and Venice

Tobias Skowronek (Dt. Bergbaumuseum /Technische FH Georg Agricola Bochum): How Refined Slovak Copper Conquered the Early Modern World Market

Max Trecker (GWZO): How Soviet Designs won the Day. Towards a Global History of Steel during the Cold War

Comment: Hailian Chen (Universität Leipzig) (via zoom)

15:45–16:00 Coffee Break



**16:00–17:45 Furs**

Chair: Sabine Stach (GWZO)

Christian Lübke (GWZO): Rauchwaren für den europäischen Markt. Zum Export von Gütern und Kenntnissen aus dem mittelalterlichen Novgorod in den Ostseeraum

Anja Rasche (Netzwerk Kunst und Kultur der Hansestädte, Stralsund): Pelze als Waren des hansischen Handels in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit

Timm Schönfelder (GWZO): Vom weichen Gold zur haute fourrure. Über die internationale Dimension des Pelzhandels zum Fin de Siècle

Comment: Werner Scheltjens (Universität Bamberg)

17:45-18:00 Coffee Break

**18:00 Keynote**

Alexander Etkind (EUI, Florenz):

Which Resources are Evil, and Why? Towards a Global History of Parasitic States (via zoom)

Moderation: Katja-Castrick-Naumann (GWZO) and Timm Schönfelder (GWZO)

19:00 Discussion over Dinner



# Friday, 8 July 2022

**9:00–10:30**

## **Precious metals and transcontinental trade**

Chair: Orsolya Heinrich-Tamáska (GWZO)

Matthias Hardt (GWZO): Arabisches Silber im östlichen Europa des Mittelalters

Carina Damm (GWZO): Tracing the Invisible – Viking Age Slave Trade between the Baltic and Caspian Seas

Liesel Gentelli (Melbourne, Australia): 17th Century Dutch Silverware Destined for the Indies: an Investigation into the Source of Silver Recovered from the Wreck of the Batavia (via zoom)

Comment: Undine Ott (GWZO)

10:30–10:45 Coffee break

## **10:45–12:15 Textiles**

Chair: Frank Hadler (GWZO)

Maria Cybulska (Łódź University of Technology)/  
Marcin Wołoszyn (GWZO): Threads across borders. The medieval silks from Gródek upon the Bug River in a broader context

Ségolène Plyer (Université de Strasbourg): North-East Bohemia as a Space of Interaction. Textile Industry, Export and Trade at the Turn of the Century (19th–20th Century)

Jan Zofka (GWZO): Cotton and Industrialization in Early Cold War Socialism

Comment: Klaus Gestwa (Universität Tübingen)

12:15–12:45 Final Discussion and Farewell

**The Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe (GWZO)** carries out comparative historical and cultural research on the region bordering the Baltic, the Black, and the Adriatic Seas from the Early Middle Ages to the present. There are currently around 50 research scholars associated with the Institute conducting work both in Germany and abroad from across the range of humanities disciplines. In its activities, the Institute relies on a dense network of cooperative partnerships with Eastern and Central European as well as international research organizations.

**[www.leibniz-gwzo.de](http://www.leibniz-gwzo.de)**

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### **Venue**

GWZO, Specks Hof (Entrance A), 4th floor  
Reichsstraße 4, 04109 Leipzig

### **Concept and Coordination**

Lucie Dušková, Jan Zofka (GWZO-Department  
»Entanglements and Globalization«),  
Timm Schönfelder (GWZO-Department »Humans  
and Environment«)

### **Scientific Committee (Concept)**

Katja Castryck-Naumann, Matthias Hardt,  
Uwe Müller, Max Trecker, Marcin Wołoszyn

### **Organization**

Julia Kuhre and Ines Rößler (GWZO-Department  
»Knowledge Transfer and Networking«)  
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