

Can we speak of a unified early modern world? Over the last decade at least, historians have debated whether overarching global connections can be detected in the period from about 1350 to about 1850. Among the various possibilities put forward—the use of gunpowder, conflict between nomads and settled urban dwellers as population grew and cultivated land use increased, the spread of pandemics, centralization of government, vernacularization of canonical textual corpora, conceptions of universal rule and millennial expectations—one phenomenon has been raised more persistently than others: the connections of commerce and increasing global economic integration, especially in the burgeoning trade in precious metals and luxury commodities across long-distance commercial networks. Of course, trade had flowed across Eurasia, around the Indian Ocean, and over the Mediterranean for millennia, but in this “early modern” period, larger parts of the globe became connected by the establishment of more or less regularized trading routes. Commodities and tribute bounced and jostled over these routes and along with them flowed knowledge. Knowledge moved in individuals as they migrated or were resettled in new territories and it moved along with sailors, soldiers, and merchants as they pursued trade and war. It traveled in objects, instruments, manuscripts, and printed books as trade routes opened up and collectors avidly sought rare and beautiful things, and it moved as factors sent back information to the metropolis. It moved as new institutions of European colonial administration, such as the Casa de Contratación of the Spanish monarchy, of religious propagation, such as the Jesuits, as well as of the new science, such as the Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris, were established and began to sponsor information gathering of all kinds. Knowledge moved not just geographically but also epistemically, as knowledge systems of different social and cultural groups intersected. Knowledge was transformed as it traveled from local settings and vernacular modes



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Il Gattopardo
 Schorlemerallee 5,
 14195 Berlin
 Tel. 030 8234648

of expression—such as manufactories in Jingdezhen and Puebla, shipbuilding arsenals in Calcutta and Ragusa, workshops and gardens everywhere, curiosity cabinets, and ships, to name only a few examples—to the knowledge and written forms of evidential studies, Bencao (materia medica) and pulu texts, astronomy and astrology, and of the “new experimental philosophy.” This movement resulted in new knowledge at the same time that it formed new hierarchies of intellectual authority. Does this global circulation of knowledge tie together an early modern world? Did it help bring into being new epistemologies and knowledge regimes? Can the rise of the “new philosophy” be linked to the movement of goods in the early modern period?

Much recent work in the history of science has focused on the circulation of knowledge within Europe and across the Atlantic World, and this has resulted in much new information about circulation, exchange, and the transformation of knowledge, as well as new conceptual and methodological perspectives on the circulation of knowledge, and, especially, on the issues of local and global in the formation of scientific knowledge. Some recent work has also begun to uncover the knowledge networks of East Asia, and with the work of the “new thalassology” on the Mediterranean, historians have also begun to examine the circulation of knowledge in this region. Meanwhile, the movement of knowledge across Eurasia (and especially across Central Asia) during the same period has been much less well-researched, despite recent scholarship on the silk routes. Thus this MPIWG Working Group will consider in the first instance the movement and circulation of knowledge across the Eurasian continent in the “late medieval” and “early modern period”—ca. 750 to 1850 (this large span of time is necessary to include all parts of Eurasia, which define “early modern” differently). Participants will examine the physical and epistemic travels of various forms of natural knowledge in this period.

Boltzmannstrasse 22 D-14195 Berlin

Telefon (+4930) 22667-0
 Telefax (+4930) 22667-299
www.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de

MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUT FÜR WISSENSCHAFTSGESCHICHTE
 Max Planck Institute for the History of Science

DEPARTMENT II

Itineraries of Materials, Recipes, Techniques, and Knowledge in the Early Modern World (Part I)

13–15 March 2014

Organization:
PAMELA SMITH

Illustrations: cover: Al-Istakhri's world map (from the Leiden manuscript dated 589/1193) World map by al-Idrisi (written 549/1154), copy of 1500, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford; core: A Type of the World in *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, Antwerp, 1570.

TYPVS ORBIS TERRARVM

Thursday, 13 March

- 09:30–10:00 Introduction
- 10:00–11:00 **Pamela Smith**,
Enroute along the Itineraries of
Materials, Recipes, Techniques, and
Knowledge in the Early Modern World
- 11:00–11:30 Coffee Break
- 11:30–12:30 **Johan Elverskog**,
Buddhism and Science on the
Silk Road
- 12:30–13:30 Lunch
- 13:30–14:30 **Tansen Sen**,
The Transfer and Circulation of
Knowledge between India and
China, 600-1300
- 14:30–15:30 **Hyunhee Park**,
The Cross-Cultural Exchange
of Geographic Knowledge and
Mapping Techniques in Late
Medieval Asia and Europe
- 15:30–16:00 Coffee Break
- 16:00–17:00 **Sven Dupré**,
Antwerp's Jewels, Books of Secrets,
and the Portuguese Trade of
Precious Stones in the Indian Ocean
- 19:00 Conference Dinner

Friday, 14 March

- 09:30–10:30 **Shigehisa Kuriyama**,
The travel of anxieties – rethinking
Western medicine in Edo Japan
- 10:30–11:00 Coffee Break
- 11:00–12:00 **Tim Stanley**,
The transmission of gun lock technology
and the Ottomans
- 12:00–13:00 **Dagmar Schäfer**,
Things (wu) and transformations (zaowu).
Material complexities in 17th-century
Chinese state and market economies
- 13:00–14:00 Lunch
- 14:00–15:00 **Harold Cook**,
Reproducible Results?: The Personal and
Impersonal in Representations of Eurasia
by Cornelis de Bruin
- 15:00–15:30 Coffee Break
- 15:30–16:30 **Dorothy Ko**,
Itineraries of Inkstones in Early Modern China

Saturday, 15 March

- 10:00–11:00 **Francesca Trivellato**,
The Circulation of a Misguided
Theory about the Origins of
European Financial Capitalism
across Eighteenth-Century
Europe: Copycat, Change, Context
- 11:00–12:00 **Mary Terrall**,
Comment,
and Group Discussion
- 12:00–14:00 Continuation of Group
Discussion over Lunch