



INTERNATIONAL
WORKSHOP

LOCATING KNOWLEDGE:

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN COMMODITY FRONTIERS

2-3 SEPTEMBER 2026

RESIDENCIA DE ESTUDIANTES, CSIC, MADRID



⌘ DAY 1 ⌘

Wednesday 2 September 2026

9:00-9:30 Welcome remarks / Coffee

9:30-11:00 Session 1. Indigenous knowledge and skills.

Chair: Simon Jackson (University of Birmingham)

Discussant: Nadin Hee (Leipzig University)

Niping Yan (University of Macau): *The Invisible Mine: Indigenous Quicksilver Production and the Limits of Imperial Knowledge in Early Modern China.*

Jose Ragas (Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Chile): *Indigenous Workers, Local Knowledge, and the Global Ice Trade in Latin America (1820-1900).*

Raphael Uchoa (Museu de Astronomia & Universidade de Coimbra): *Amazonia as a Commodity Frontier. Ethnobotany, U.S. Bioprospecting, and the Political Economy of Indigenous Knowledge.*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:00 Session 2. Cultivation under threat.

Chair: Jonathan Curry-Machado (University of London)

Discussant: Corey Ross (University of Basel)

Sohee Ryuk (University College Dublin): *Grappling with Crisis: Local Agricultural Knowledge in Late Nineteenth-Century Georgia, 1860s-1890s.*

Tomas Bartoletti (ETH Zurich): *Insect Empires and Cotton Frontiers, 1900-1930s: The Pink Bollworm between Brazil, Egypt, and Italian East Africa.*

Frank Uekotter (Ruhr University Bochum): *Saving Trees and Social Order on Zanzibar. The Quest to Understand the Sudden Death of Clove Trees on an Arab-African Island.*

13:00-14:15 Lunch

14:15-15:45 Session 3. Animal frontiers.

Chair: Jonathan Robins (Michigan Technological University)

Discussant: Samuel Coghe (Ghent University)

Abdulhamit Kirmizi (Marmara University, Istanbul & University College Dublin): *The Ottoman Pastoral Commodity Frontier: Tribal Economies, Knowledge, and the Regulation of Livestock Exports.*

Haixing Wang (University of Birmingham): *Italian Bees in South China: The Un/Making of Apicultural Expertise in 1930s Canton.*

Sikiru Yusuff (Florida International University) online: *From Experimentation to Development: The Rise of Fisheries Science in Colonial Nigeria, 1940-1945.*

15:45-16:30 Coffee break

16:30-18:00 Keynote lecture (open to the public)

Chair: David Pretel (CSIC).

David Edgerton (King's College London): *"Into the Hidden Place": Reflections on the History and Historiography of Production.*

20:00 Conference cocktail dinner

Gardens of the Residencia de Estudiantes, next to the "Habitacion Historica"

🌸 DAY 2 🌸

Thursday 3 September 2026

9:00-9:30 Coffee

9:30-10:45 Session 4. Botanical and agricultural knowledge.

Chair: Leida Fernandez Prieto (CSIC)

Discussant: Jean Stubbs (University of London).

Valeria Giacomini (Università Bocconi, Milan): *The Synthetic Frontier: High Modernism, Vernacular Sylviculture, and the Epistemic Battle for Malaya's Rubber (1930-1960).*

Rachel Steely (Harvard University): *Teaching Plants to Ignore the Sun: Agronomic Knowledge and the Making of Brazil's Soybean Frontier.*

10:45-11:15 Coffee break

11:15-12:30 Session 5. Mapping and data.

Chair: Jelmer Vos (University of Glasgow)

Discussant: David Pretel (CSIC)

Andrea Alvarez-Laorden (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona): *Mining Data, Data for Mining: Satellites, Commodity Frontiers, and the Colombian Andes (1986-1993).*

Ritika Lal (New York University): *Shifting Commodities, Shifting Terrain: A Twentieth Century History of Mapping Al-Hasa, Saudi Arabia.*

12:30-13:15 Final discussion and closing remarks

13:15-14:30 Lunch



Commodities of Empire



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