

# **Global and local aspects of pre-industrial inflations. New studies about inflationary processes in Central Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century**

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## **Contribution to session 15: Global Monies and Price Histories, 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

Proceeding in accordance with considerations about the characterization of inflationary processes, this article wants to describe some of these processes appearing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the German Empire and to survey their causes as well as their background.<sup>1</sup> This analysis is based on knowledge that has been gained only a short time ago within the scope of investigations into the history of trade and prices. Since there are excellent and valuable sources available from 1736, the description is focused on the Hanseatic town Hamburg, which not only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century showed itself to be the single German port of global importance and therefore was more exposed to international influences than other German towns. Further emphasis will be put on the Lower Saxon territories in the Hamburg hinterland, the electorate Hanover and the duchy Brunswick-Wolfenbuettel, with Brunswick, Celle, Goettingen, Hanover, Lueneburg and the mining region of the Harz Mountains, for which also a lot of price lists are available. Just like the smaller duchy, the electorate Hanover, which was comparatively big for Germany in those days, was – despite its personal union with England – mainly formed by regional and local influences. Together these two are an interesting counterpart to the cosmopolitan Hamburg where merchants considered the Lower Saxon territories to a great extent only as sales areas. It is the objective of research to show how far inflationary processes went off either similarly or differently in these two areas – perhaps even independently of one another – and to find out the decisive factors. The research is carried out with baskets of goods containing for Hamburg as well as for its hinterland each time about 30 different products.

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<sup>1</sup> Hans-Jürgen Gerhard, Gewürzpreise in europäischen Handelszentren im 18. Jahrhundert. In: Markus A. Denzel (ed.), *Gewürze: Produktion, Handel und Konsum in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Beiträge zum 2. Ernährungshistorischen Kolloquium im Landkreis Kulmbach, St. Katharinen 1999, pp. 149–186; Hans-Jürgen Gerhard unter Mitarbeit von Alexander Engel, *Preise als Indikatoren von Marktverflechtungen des nordwestdeutschen Raumes 1800 bis 1850*. In: Karl Heinrich Kaufhold / Markus A. Denzel (eds.), *Der Handel im Kurfürstentum / Königreich Hannover (1780–1850)*, Stuttgart 2000, S. 101–138; Markus A. Denzel / Hans-Juergen Gerhard / Alexander Engel, *Marktverflechtungen von Kupfermärkten des nördlichen Kontinentaleuropas im 18. Jahrhundert*. In: Christoph Bartels / Markus A. Denzel (eds.) *Konjunkturen im europäischen Bergbau in vorindustrieller Zeit*. Festschrift für Ekkehard Westermann zum 60. Geburtstag, Stuttgart 2000, S. 237–271; Hans-Jürgen Gerhard, *Entwicklungen auf europäischen Kaffeemärkten 1735–1810. Eine preishistorische Studie zur Geschichte eines Welthandelsgutes*. In: Rainer Goemmel / Markus A. Denzel (eds.), *Weltwirtschaft und Wirtschaftsordnung*. Festschrift für Juergen Schneider zum 65. Geburtstag, Stuttgart 2002, pp. 151–168.