



The Forum of Ancient Religions
invites the public to the lecture of
Prof. Joachim Schaper,
University of Aberdeen

May 10th (Wednesday)

4:15 - 5:45

Gilman 260

**Material Practices, Abstract Concepts:
Counting, Weighing and Measuring
and the Rise of 'Justice'**

Human labour and the evolution of knowledge are interdependent. Can this be demonstrated? How do material practices engender cognitive processes and, ultimately, abstract concepts? And what effects do these then have? This paper explores the roots of ancient Near Eastern concepts of justice in cultural practices such as counting, weighing and measuring, i.e., concepts won through abstraction (like other abstract concepts, e.g., mathematical and philosophical ones). Special interest will be given to different types of balances and to processes of standardisation.