

**Paper Abstracts, AMEMG Conference  
September 25-26, 2015  
St. Francis Xavier University  
Antigonish, NS**

**Friday evening**

Richard Raiswell, University of Prince Edward Island, **“Black Cats with Roasted and Boiled Babies: The *Errores Gazariorum* and Synagogue of Satan”**

The *Errores gazariorum*, likely produced during the first half of the 1430s in Savoy, describes a sect of devil worshippers. According to the text, at frequent gatherings, initiates assembled to do homage to the devil and pledge themselves to all manner of *maleficia* and depravity. But these meetings were about more than just preserving legal niceties between the devil and his worshippers, for after renewing their vows, members feasted upon roasted and boiled children, made ointments out of the rendered fat of their victims—mixing it with the venom of poisonous creatures to make an ointment noxious even to the touch—and then engaged in every permutation of unnatural coupling of which they could conceive. While this is clearly an early iteration of what would become the witches’ sabbat, an integral part of the construction of witch belief in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the anonymous author of the *Errores* called this gathering the “Synagogue of Satan.”

“Synagogue of Satan” comes originally from Revelations where John of Patmos uses it to denote those who call themselves Jews but are not (Revs. 2.9, cf. 3.9). John seems to have intended the term to describe—at least in part—opponents within the early Jesus movement who still classified themselves as Jews in a way he found unacceptable. As a divisive, secret force of hypocrites within the broader movement, then, he links them to the drama of the end times, effectively equating them with the false prophets of Matthew 24.11.

In general, medieval authors appropriated John’s sense of the term, using it in discussions about the nature of the last days or as a form of approbation against some contemporary abuse. Despite this, no theologian before the fifteenth century seems to have gone to any length to define the nature of the Synagogue. By the time it began to be used in Savoy, then, it was a term of signification but devoid of content. In choosing to frame the fantastical activities to which witches confessed as descriptions of what happened at the Synagogue’s meetings, Inquisitors dramatically changed the sense of the term, but in the process transformed witchcraft into something far more sinister than it had ever been before.

**Saturday**

**Session 1**

Lauren Beck, **“Indigenous Travels to Spain in the Early Modern Period: The Journeys of Hernando de Tapia and Calisto Tupac”**

Hernando de Tapia Conín, an Otomi merchant living a few kilometers from Mexico City shortly after Cortés’s capture of that city in 1521, and Calisto Tupac Inga, an Incan missionary living in eighteenth-century Peru, exemplify some of the indigenous travelers who discovered, explored Spain, and left behind traces of their experience in letters, accounts, and material goods. Situated within a larger project that attempts to comprehend the Americas’ discovery of Europe and to re-orient the east-west and old-world to new-world paradigm affecting scholarship relating to the age of discovery and exploration, the resurrection and critical examination of these narrative voices yields important historical and cultural insights into how Europe, its inhabitants, its cities, and its cultures were viewed and understood by the native peoples of the Americas both in absentia and never having crossed the Atlantic and in situ in the form of travelogues and similar documentation. This presentation will contextualize the experiences of these travelers with archival research as well as reflect upon the motivations for their journeys and the difficulties involved with bringing these voices and materials to light today.

Stephanie Pettigrew, **“Early European Expansion: Re-Imagining the Imperial Narrative”**

This paper seeks to answer a seemingly simple question: to the early modern explorer, was Greenland part of North America or Europe?

The answer to this question has important ramifications on how we think about early modern European expansion and notions of imperialism. If Greenland was considered part of Europe once it was colonized by the Norse, there’s a strong possibility that inhabitants of Iceland, Norway, Scotland, Ireland, and England knew of the existence of the territories we now call Newfoundland, Labrador, and Baffin Island long before the explorations of Cabot and Columbus. If it was considered part of North America, it would not only indicate a lack of communication between Greenland and the rest of the Early Modern world, but also an openness of territory up for grabs in the North Atlantic once the Portuguese and the Spanish began their expansion into the Americas. Is it possible that early modern European explorers were already aware of a land mass to the west prior to Columbus’ voyage? What was the true state of affairs in the Early Modern North Atlantic? Clues can be found both in textual and archaeological evidence, but the only way to really stitch the story together is by unifying the histories of several nation-states which are currently only studied separately – Portuguese, English, Spanish, and Scandinavian.

Gregory Kennedy et Vincent Auffrey, Université de Moncton, « **Alexandre Bourg, la vie frontalière et l’émergence d’une élite communautaire en Acadie, 1671 à 1760** »

La vie d'Alexandre Bourg soit à la fois exemplaire et exceptionnelle en Acadie coloniale. Fils d'un des colons fondateurs à Port Royal, il s'est marié à Grand-Pré en 1694 et il avait au minimum seize enfants. Cultivateur et petit commerçant, il fut nommé notaire par les autorités

françaises, puis par les autorités britanniques suite à leur conquête de la colonie en 1713. D'ailleurs, Alexandre dit Belle-humeur agissait souvent en guise de délégué des habitants de sa communauté, notamment lors des négociations entourant la question du serment de fidélité exigé par les Britanniques ainsi que pendant l'expédition militaire française de François Dupont Duvivier de 1744. Viré de ses offices par les autorités britanniques suite à une enquête, il s'est établi finalement sur l'île Royale vers 1752. Pourtant, la vie ne restait pas calme longtemps. Lors du Grand dérangement, il se trouve parmi le groupe de réfugiés acadiens à Richibouctou où il s'est trouvait la mort en 1760 à l'âge de 90 ans. Bourg était donc exemplaire dans sa vie familiale et rurale, mais exceptionnel dans son rôle de leadership dans la communauté et par sa persévérance.

Il existe très peu d'ouvrages portant sur les individus acadiens de la période coloniale. Si certains seigneurs ou gouverneurs ont gagné leurs biographies, les leaders communautaires ne recevaient jamais beaucoup d'attention des experts avec l'exception notable des généalogistes. Sans doute, l'état lacunaire des sources documentaires empêche un tel projet. Pourtant, grâce à ses activités officielles et son réseau de parenté, il est possible de retracer plusieurs éléments de la vie d'Alexandre Bourg. Il est un des rares Acadiens avec un article de référence dans le dictionnaire biographie canadien. Cependant, cet article s'avère court et incomplet et il est maintenant le moment de consacrer une étude de plus grande envergure à cet acteur historique intéressant et symbolique des enjeux de la vie acadienne sur la frontière impériale.

## Session 2

Dr. Julie Sutherland, Athabasca University/Cape Breton University, **“A little refreshing adultery?: Chapman’s *Bussy d’Ambois* and the Sexual Woman”**

Although George Chapman’s name is most often associated with his translations of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the poet also continues to be known for his significant role in the growth of London’s commercial theatre during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The last several years have seen important revivals of at least two of Chapman’s plays: *An Humorous Day’s Mirth*, as part of Shakespeare’s Globe’s Read Not Dead series in 2009 and *Bussy d’Ambois*, as part of Owle Schreame’s Cannibal Valour Rep season in 2013 (also produced by the renowned Old Vic Theatre in 1988).

One explanation for Bussy’s modern – if modest – revival is that it is among a number of English Renaissance plays that stage cautiously open-minded examinations of female sexuality. While ultimately reinforcing the period’s cultural fantasies about gender, Bussy d’Ambois does, more frankly than many English Renaissance plays, investigate how the period’s views on women’s sexuality had damaging physical and psychological effects. The audience’s sympathy for the rebellious woman problematizes the restoration of traditional order in the play’s last act. By examining the play’s sexual harassment and graphic stage torture as well as the lead female character’s battle between conscience and desire and her surprisingly elevated tongue, this paper will explore how Chapman entered the period’s debate about the status of women. It will argue that Chapman presented a refreshing, albeit limited, view of women’s ‘monstrous’

sexuality as potentially liberating, and contended that the tragedy lay not in their lascivious natures but in the repressing of their sexual urges.

Krista Kesselring (Dalhousie) – **“Licensed or Licentious? Divorce with Remarriage in the English Reformation”**

Unlike all others who adopted Protestantism in the Reformation era, the English did not ultimately allow divorce with remarriage. Every other Protestant jurisdiction overturned centuries of Catholic practice and canon law to allow full divorce, in at least some few circumstances, but not the English. Divorces by act of parliament began in the 1690s; judicial divorces became possible only in the 1850s. So much we know, or think we know, even if the reasons for this long refusal remain confusing; but at various points in English history, some people thought otherwise. Nineteenth-century campaigners argued that divorce with remarriage had, briefly, been authorized after the Reformation, a change only reversed with the *Rye v. Foljambe* case in 1602. Edward Rye, the father of Hercules Foljambe’s third ‘wife’ Sarah, tried reclaiming for her property that Hercules had added to his own portfolio, despite having two previous wives still living. This property case quickly became about the legality of divorce with remarriage, prompting a high level declaration that it was not, in fact, permitted. When an extension of divorce law reappeared on the parliamentary agenda in the early twentieth century, ecclesiastical historian Lewis Dibdin convincingly demonstrated that earlier readings of the case erred, showing that ‘officially’, the Church had not at any point allowed such divorces. The decision in *Rye v. Foljambe* constituted nothing more than a clarification, he said. Dibdin allowed, however, that a good many people in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries had indeed been confused on this point, and had acted as if free to divorce and remarry.

In this paper, I want to study this confusion and its implications. While previous discussions of *Rye v. Foljambe* have relied on the short notice in the law reports, fuller records can be found in the papers of Star Chamber. These and other records can help clarify something of the ways in which issues of sex, gender, and marriage were imbricated in the process we call the Reformation; they speak, too, to the ways in which ‘history’ gets used and abused in discussions about what marriage ‘ought’ to be.

Tim Stretton, Saint Mary’s University, **“Marriage and Contract in Early Modern England”**

Literary scholars have long been aware of the near saturation of English Renaissance plays with plots involving marriages. The City Comedies of the early Jacobean period in particular play on the contrast between a traditional vision of society formed of reciprocal obligations between (and within) the social ranks of a status hierarchy, towards a more self-interested notion of social obligations based on contractual thinking. And again and again this contrast is demonstrated through marriages. This paper identifies and examines contractual changes during this period from a social historian’s, rather than a legal historian’s, perspective and stresses the links between marital contracts and financial contracts (arguing that the primary meaning of ‘contract’ at this time was marital rather than commercial). The argument rests on

an analysis of the increasing use of conditional bonds (similar to Shylock's bond in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*); the implications of the displacement of dower by jointure in marital negotiations; and the increasingly contractual nature of private marital separations (in a society where divorce in the modern sense was unavailable).

### Session 3

Simon Kow, University of King's College, **"The Tolerant Emperor: Bayle on Religious Toleration and China"**

I would like to present a revised version of a short selection from my current manuscript on China in early Enlightenment political thought. Pierre Bayle has been recognised as a major proponent of the early Enlightenment idealisation of China as a society of atheists, based on remarks especially in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (first published 1697) and the *Continuation des pensées diverses* of 1704. Yet he also mentioned China in his 1685 *Commentaire philosophique*, published the same year as Louis XIV's revocation of the Edict of Nantes and three years after his first arguments on the viability of a rational society of atheists. The 1685 work, however, is a strident defence of religious toleration which only recommends limited toleration for atheists and which depicts the Chinese emperor and state as pagan and tolerant, not atheistic. I argue that Bayle's presentation of the Chinese in the *Commentaire philosophique* demonstrates the degree to which he championed the rights of errant conscience given the inadequacy of reason as a guide to morality. Hence, China served strategic purposes for Bayle not only in confirming the possibility of rational atheism in other works but also the need for comprehensive religious toleration by the state. These diverse and contradictory accounts of China indicate the various tensions in Bayle's thought: between atheism and toleration, and between reason and conscience.

Neil G. Robertson, University of King's College, **"Constitutional Liberty in the Eighteenth Century"**

I will focus on Montesquieu, but set his thought in the wider context of the general movement to develop a sense of liberty as residing, not in the pre-political state of nature, but only in historically actual legal and constitutional orders. I will use the Magna Carta anniversary as a kind of launch point for this.

Gary Waite, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, **"The Religious Roots of Disbelief in the Enlightenment"**

I and Michael Driedger of Brock University have embarked on a new SSHRC funded research program, "Amsterdarnified! Religious Dissenters, Anti-Providential Ideas and Urban Associationalism in the Emergence of the Early Enlightenment in England and the Low Countries, 1540-1700." The title arises from a 1641 English Puritan's pamphlet complaining that his country was being "Amsterdarnified" as laypeople presumed to speak and write authoritatively on religion. Diverse public discourse on religion and philosophy was indeed

growing in England, but had long been a hallmark of Amsterdam, especially among the many heterodox groups allowed to flourish in the Dutch Republic. This research in essence will highlight the impact of spiritualism in reshaping traditional religious (and philosophical) beliefs, revealing the religious roots of new approaches to religion and science in the long seventeenth century. Here I will provide a couple brief examples of how the deeply religious musings of sixteenth-century Spiritualists such as David Joris Hendrik Niclaes and Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert who emphasized the personal inspiration of the Holy Spirit over the letter of scripture were propagated and adapted in the seventeenth century in ways that encouraged new, creative ways of thinking about the cosmos. In particular, a key marker of Enlightenment thought was the denial of a creaturely devil, something that Joris had suggested well before the infamous witch hunts.

## **Session 4**

Adriana Benzaquén, Mount Saint Vincent University, **“The Quicksilver in the Weatherglass: John Locke and Mary Clarke on Health, Illness and Medicine”**

Mary Clarke (c. 1656-1706) was the wife of John Locke’s close friend Edward Clarke. Whereas, in his study of Locke’s practise as a physician, Kenneth Dewhurst dismissed Mary as a hypochondriac who “constantly plagued” Locke with her complaints and requests for medical advice, close analysis of the correspondence between Locke and the Clarks reveals a more complex picture of Mary’s experiences of illness and the tension between trust in, and misgivings about, physicians and “physic.” The letters provide strong evidence that medicine, however imperfect its knowledge and ineffective its treatments, played a central role in the lives of early modern Englishwomen of her class. The doctor’s advice was not always followed to the letter, and the prescribed treatments not always led to recovery; still, for Mary Clarke and her family Locke’s medical expertise continued to offer hope. I will pay particular attention to Mary’s and Locke’s awareness of the relation between body and mind and examine their use of the image of the quicksilver in the weatherglass. In her September 6, 1696 letter to her husband Mary wrote that, just as the quicksilver rises or falls depending on the weather, her rising or sinking spirits affected her whole body. Locke concurred with Mary’s perception, suggesting that half her cure would depend on his prescriptions and the other half on her own state of mind.

Edith Snook, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, **“Health, Hygiene, and Hair in Early Modern England”**

This 15-minute paper will consider how hair in early modern England can be understood within the framework of health and medicine. Examining medical texts, including anatomy texts and medical recipes, the paper analyses learned early modern constructions of the hair of the body and head as an active and necessary part of human physiology. It will consider how ideas about healthy hair related to notions of the health of the body as a whole, the perceived functions of medical recipes that were used to tend to the hair, and how hair marked the body’s hygiene and its rejection of putrefaction.

Kathryn Morris, University of King's College, **"Demons & Bodies: The Devil in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Vampire Debates"**

I'd like to look at notions of the devil and demonic power as they were invoked in the eighteenth-century vampire debates. A key question in the debates was how reports of vampiric activity (which were emerging out of eastern Europe) ought to be explained. Some proposed that the vampires were actually corpses that had been re-animated by demons. This form of explanation had historical weight in its favour, as it had been invoked since the Middle Ages to account for the reported activities of revenants. In the eighteenth century, however, ideas about the devil and the extent of his powers were far from settled. I will explore how broader discussions of the nature of the devil shaped the vampire debates (and perhaps vice versa).

## **Session 5**

Ronald Huebert, Dalhousie University, **"'Sacred Lust': The Private Devotions of John Saltmarsh"**

I propose to outline some of the ways in which this largely forgotten clergyman and poet makes a claim on our attention today. Nominally devoted to the Puritan cause (as chaplain in the New Model Army, for example), Saltmarsh did not fit comfortably into any of the categories that seventeenth-century piety constructed for him. In his polemical writing he promoted the doctrine of Free Grace, a radical and outspoken challenge of predestination. In this devotional writing, both in poetry (*Poemata Sacra, Latinè & Anglicè Scripta*, 1636) and prose (*Holy Discoveries and Flames*, 1640), he celebrates a spiritual transcendence that is created and sustained by the rhetoric of pleasure. The centerpiece of this presentation will be an analysis of one of Saltmarsh's most interesting poems, "A Meditation upon the Song of Songs or, a Request to Solomon." The speaker of this text has the audacity to question Solomon in detail about his representation of Christ as the amorous bridegroom:

Can his complexion suit a Ladies room  
Who hath but lately peept out of his tombe?  
Whose hair & breath's still powderd with the dust,  
Perfumed with a grave, can he breathe lust,  
Lust holy like himselfe?

At this point I will not disclose the answer Saltmarsh offers, except to say that, like the question itself, it underscores the generously idiosyncratic outlook of the writer we encounter here.

Janine Rogers, Mount Allison University, **"Compiling and Collaboration: On an Interdisciplinary Research Project"**

Over the last 2 years I have been collaborating with Dr. Samuel Gessner from the University of Lisbon on a project on Chaucer's "Treatise on the Astrolabe." Dr. Gessner is a historian of scientific instruments, specializing in the early modern period in Europe. I am a literary scholar

with specializations in English medieval poetry, and literature and science. This past spring, Dr. Gessner and I began to circulate our research in conference papers. We've noticed that not only is our research itself of interest to our colleagues, but so is our collaborative process. In this paper I would like to briefly describe the project itself, which considers the interconnections between literate culture and instrument culture, as well as the link between medieval and early modern disciplinary periods. But I would also like to discuss the way in which Dr. Gessner and I work and write with this project; the nature of our collaboration in some ways reflects the substance of our analysis. We are compiling together very different areas of knowledge, and in so doing, are discovering new things about our home disciplines. In our research we argue that Chaucer's "Treatise" bridges medieval and modern, instrument and text, English and European, and manuscript and print cultures. In our collaboration, we find that we bridge scholarly communities, methods, and resources; I think that this experience would be of interest to an interdisciplinary group like the AMEMG.

Ranke de Vries, St. Francis Xavier University, **"Scribal Attitudes and Editing in Medieval Irish Manuscripts"**

In studying medieval Irish literature and culture, we are largely dependent on the various extant manuscripts. The texts in medieval Irish manuscripts are usually anonymous and reflect an earlier oral tradition. As such, these texts should be regarded, not as definitive versions, but rather as possible representations of a text, with variation according to the intended audience or the opinion of the scribe. One might think that scribes might be more hesitant to edit poetry, especially with regard to those works attributed to famous poets. In this presentation, I will provide evidence to the contrary, by examining the extant versions of one or two early poems attributed to the 7<sup>th</sup> century scribe Luccreth moccu Chíara.

## **Session 6**

William Lundell, Mount Allison University, **"New Evidence of the Durability of Carthusian Support for the Council of Basel in the Wake of the Basel Schism (1437)"**

On 3. May 1440 the Carthusian general chapter wrote to the Council of Basel (1431–1449) to announce its decision to give the order's allegiance to the council and its recently-elected pope, Felix V (r.1439–1449) in the Council's bitter struggle with Pope Eugenius IV (r.1431–1447) for authority within the church. Although I have discovered no evidence that the Carthusian order formally repudiated this declaration, it is clear that by 1442/43 the order was troubled by internal dissension when a minority of priors, principally of Italian houses, signaled their wish to return to obedience to Eugenius. My paper attempts to cast light on this difficult moment by analyzing a letter read out before a general session of the Council, likely in April 1443, by which an anonymous Carthusian answered publicly a letter (regrettably now lost) by which Nicholas Cardinal Albergati, a supporter of Eugenius and a former prior of the charterhouse at Bologna, had attempted to persuade him to give up his support for Basel and Felix. This letter not only testifies to the durability of the Carthusian 1440 declaration but provides also insight into one of the sources of that durability: the author's belief that, in attempting to recast the pope as



the ministerial head of the church, the fathers at Basel were establishing a polity for the church at large that resembled the polity that served the Carthusians themselves so well.

Karim Baccouche, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, **“Preaching Against the Witches’ Sabbath: Demonological Debates in the Fifteenth Century and the Case of Guillaume Adeline.”**

In 1453, Guillaume Adeline, preacher and master theologian was arrested by order of the bishop of Evreux for belonging to a diabolical sect of witches and for preaching since the 1430’s the non-existence of the witches’ sabbath. His exceptional case helps to shed light on the nature of the theological debate during the fifteenth century over the possibility for witches to fly and the existence of the sabbath itself. Moreover, the case of Adeline not only helped to define demonological theory, it also became a means to promote and circulate witchcraft theory by being used as an exempla by preachers and demonologists who sought to show that demonic witchcraft was real. Nicolas Jacquier and Pierre Marmoris, among others, used this case in their demonological writings to show that night flying was real, or at least possible, and to emphasize the threat posed by a sect of witches operating under the orders of the devil.

Todd Pettigrew, Cape Breton University, **“‘The Devil is a Juggler’: Pythagoras as Witch in the English Renaissance”**

Scholars of the early modern period have frequently noted the influence of Pythagorean thought in the English Renaissance. In particular, much has been said about the Pythagorean school’s emphasis on the notion that the whole universe is composed of numbers in harmonious connections. Less attention, however, has been given to the figure of Pythagoras himself along with his many reported miraculous characteristics and abilities. And indeed, many astonishing things were said about the ancient figure – that he had, for example, a thigh made of gold, proof that he had travelled to the underworld and back. My paper will consider the early modern fascination with another strange attribute of Pythagoras: his ability to be in two places at once. For seventeenth-century witchcraft expert John Cotta, for example, this ability was the best example of an act that was necessarily supernatural and thus an iconic instance of witchcraft against which modern instances should be measured. Taking Cotta’s *Trial of Witchcraft* (1616) as its prime example, this paper will discuss how this aspect of the Pythagoras legend functioned in the logic of the witchcraft debate of the day.