

EMPIRE

and

Identity

in the early modern world, 1350-1850

**Seventh FEEGI Biennial Conference
Georgetown University
Washington DC
22-23 February 2008**



Thursday, 21 February 2008

Informal no-host gathering to meet officers and other attendees.

Join the FEEGI officers between 7pm and 9pm at Martin's Tavern in Georgetown • We will probably eat earlier, but Martin's offers a full dinner menu as well as a bar menu • 1264 Wisconsin Ave, NW (between Prospect and N St.) • 202-333-7370 •

Friday, 22 February 2008

On Friday, registration and all panels and breaks will be in the Leavey Program Room in Leavey Center, Georgetown University. The evening reception is in the historic Riggs Library.

8:30AM–9:00AM—Registration

9:00AM—Welcome from the President of FEEGI

Kris Lane, College of William and Mary

9:15AM–10:45AM—Session One: People in Motion

Chair: Kris Lane, College of William and Mary and President of FEEGI

Mary Jane Maxwell, Western Kentucky University—“Journeys of Faith and Fortune: Christian Merchants in the Dar al-Islam”

Richard Bond, Virginia Wesleyan College—“‘Most Villainously Detaining’: English and Spanish Captives in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic”

Jeff Fortin, State University of New York at Oneonta—“African-American Imperialism: Creating the Black Atlantic World, 1795–1817”

10:45AM–11:15AM—Coffee Break

11:15AM–12:30PM—Session Two: Imperial Strategies

Chair: Carla Gardina Pestana, Miami University

Mark Meuwese, University of Winnipeg—“Underestimating the Natives: Revisiting the Dutch West India Company's Failure to Capture the Portuguese Empire in the Southern Atlantic, 1623–1626”

Lauren Benton, New York University—“Island Chains: Penal Colonies and Imperial Sovereignty, 1780–1840”

12:30PM–2:30PM—Lunch

Lunch independently—a list of local restaurants will be provided.

2:30PM–4:00PM—Session Three: Transforming Local Identities

Chair: Wim Klooster, Clark University

Sebastian Marc Barrevel, Stanford University—“‘Can Leopards lose their spots?’ The education of Ambonese children in the United Provinces, 1621–1629”

Zoltán Biedermann, Center for Overseas History, Lisbon—“Manipulating Identities: Princely Conversions in Early Colonial Sri Lanka (1500–1650)”

Poppy Fry, Saint Anselm College—“The ‘Fingo Emancipation’ of 1835 and the Development of Cape Liberalism”

4:00PM–4:30PM—Coffee Break

4:30PM–6:00PM—Session Four: Framing Empire

Chair: Daniel K. Richter, University of Pennsylvania

Anya Zilberstein, Concordia University—“England is Like this a Cold Northern Country’: Natural History, Climate, and the Idea of Regions in the British Empire”

Giancarlo L. Casale, University of Minnesota—“Empires of the Mind in Tunuslu Hajji Ahmed’s World Map”

6:15PM–7:15PM—Reception

Riggs Library, Georgetown University

Saturday, 23 February 2008

On Saturday, our base is the Intercultural Center (ICC), home of the GU History Department. For lunch, we return to the Leavey Program Room. For the banquet, we head to Adams-Morgan.

8:30AM–9:00AM—Registration

History Department, ICC 600

9:00AM–10:30AM—Session Five: Trades and Traders

Chair: Marcy Norton, George Washington University

Location: ICC 103

Peter Mark, Wesleyan University and **Jose da Silva Horta, Universidade de Lisboa**—“New Christian and Jewish Weapons Traders in 17th-century West Africa: From Lisbon to Amsterdam to Marrakesh to Senegal”

George Bryan Souza, University of Texas at San Antonio—“Sri Lankan Cinnamon, the Mahabadda, the Portuguese and the Company: Commerce and Communal Relations, c. 1590–c. 1690”

Henriette de Bruyn Kops, Georgetown University—“Seaborne Imperialists or Tightfisted Opportunists? Conflicting Images of the Dutch in the 17th Century”

10:30AM–11:00AM—Coffee Break (ICC 600)

11:00AM–12:30PM—Session Six: Views of Empire

Chair: Philip J. Stern, American University

Location: ICC 103

Eleanor Hughes, Yale Center for British Art—“Classical Orient, Romantic Orient: 18th-Century British Visual Culture and the Levant”

Phyllis Hunter, University of North Carolina Greensboro—“From Massachusetts to Madras: Renegotiating Identity in the First British Empire”

Amélia Polónia, University of Porto—“Global and Local Interactions in the Portuguese Overseas Empire: Networks and Cooperation Patterns in the Construction of Social Identities of Seafaring Communities”

12:30pm–2:00pm—Business Meeting and Lunch

Leavey Program Room, Leavey Center.

Open to all FEEGI members.

On the Agenda: Elections and other FEEGI business.

Sandwiches and drinks will be provided.

2:00PM–3:30PM—Session Seven: Commodities and Objects

Chair: David Hancock, University of Michigan

Location: ICC 103

Elizabeth Sutton, University of Iowa—“Natural History and Ethnography: Classifying Animals, Plants, and Africans in Early Modern Dutch Travel Accounts”

Michelle Craig McDonald, Stockton College—“From Imperial to National Commodity: How Coffee’s Identity Was Repackaged”

Christina Folke Ax, University of Copenhagen—“Objects of Empire and the Construction of Identity in 18th-century Colonial Iceland”

3:30PM–4:00PM—Coffee Break (ICC 600)

4:00PM–5:30PM—Session Eight: Conflict on the Margins

Chair: Linda M. Rupert, University of North Carolina Greensboro

Location: ICC 103

Matthew Restall, Pennsylvania State University—“Yucatan and Belize: A New History of a Forgotten Frontier”

John Savage, Lehigh University—“Sacred Science in Slave Society: ‘Poison’ and Identity in Martinique”

Allan Dwyer, Memorial University of Newfoundland—“‘The most outrageous Set of People’: British Imperial Identity and the Newfoundland Irish Threat, 1740–1800”

6:30PM–8:30PM—Banquet and Keynote Address

Kris Lane, President of FEEGI, College of William and Mary:

**“Everybody Must Get Stoned:
Rock Medicine in the Early Modern World”**

Banquet at Las Canteras, a Peruvian restaurant.

Please make your own way to the banquet. The restaurant is at 2307 18th Street, NW, Adams-Morgan • (202) 265-1780

Note: separate registration required for the banquet. Attendees must bring their banquet ticket with menu selections.

Acknowledgments

Institutional Support

Georgetown University

Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Dean of Georgetown College
Department of History

University of Maryland Baltimore County, Department of History

University of North Carolina Greensboro, Department of History

Pennsylvania State University, Department of History

Local Arrangements

Alison Games, Georgetown University (*deserves special recognition for coordinating the efforts of others as well as arranging a multitude of things herself*)

Thomas Cohen, Catholic University of America

Marcy Norton, George Washington University

Verónica Vallejo, Georgetown University

Program Committee

Conference and Program Chair: Marjoleine Kars, University of Maryland Baltimore County

Dayo Nicole Mitchell, University of Oregon/Pennsylvania State University

Laura Mitchell, University of California Irvine

Linda M. Rupert, University of North Carolina Greensboro

About FEEGI

Thank you for joining us at Georgetown University for the Seventh Biennial Conference of the Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction. FEEGI is an organization of scholars dedicated to the study of the expansion of Europe and the world-wide response to that expansion, from its beginnings in the fourteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century. Composed largely of historians, but welcoming interdisciplinary approaches, FEEGI aims to encourage scholarship and collaboration across the boundaries of national histories.

Conferences

FEEGI meets every two years. FEEGI's first conference in 1996 established a practice that continues to the present: panels at FEEGI meetings are organized topically, rather than geographically or by nation, to encourage comparative thinking across large amounts of space and time. By custom all sessions have been plenary, thus privileging the collective and collegial interaction which is at the heart of FEEGI's enterprise, and offering the possibility of making theoretical connections outside the limits of a conference session.

Executive Committee, 2006-2008

President: Kris Lane, College of William and Mary

Vice-President: Marjoleine Kars, University of Maryland Baltimore County,

Secretary-Treasurer: Linda M. Rupert, University of North Carolina Greensboro

Editor: Dayo Nicole Mitchell, University of Oregon/Pennsylvania State University

Members-at-Large:

Alison Games, Georgetown University

David Hancock, University of Michigan

Wim Klooster, Clark University

Laura Mitchell, University of California Irvine

FEEGI was founded in 1994 and is an affiliated society of the American Historical Association. Please visit the FEEGI website at <<http://feegi.org>> for more information.

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Booklet of Abstracts

Forum on European Expansion and Global Interaction

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Session One: People in Motion

Mary Jane Maxwell, Western Kentucky University

“Journeys of Faith and Fortune: Christian Merchants in the Dar al-Islam”

This paper examines multiple travels accounts left behind by European and Russian Christian merchants in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as they plied their trade in the Islamic world. It seeks to explain how these individuals altered or maintained their religious identities due to contact with Muslims. My portrait of these merchants depict the religious, social, and cultural perspectives they brought with them on their journeys, and then shows them reacting to the Muslims they encountered. What did they find interesting? What disturbed them? Why did they adapt and adopt some social and cultural norms in a foreign land, yet resist others? I emphasize how the choices of these merchants to speak, dress, and publicly worship as Muslims sheds light on the cross-cultural exchanges that often led to religious conversion. In the fifteenth century, many Christians, I argue, developed a syncretic form of Christian-Muslim worship and I underscore the parallels between Islam and Christianity that eased their quasi-conversions. I stress that some merchants thoughtfully considered Islam’s spiritual attributes, in other cases social networks and interpersonal relationships led to conversion, and that motivation for conversion differed in various Muslim regions. But by the 16th century, the developing notion of empire, it seems, resulted in a profound shift in identity among European merchants. No longer would the voluntary adoption of a Muslim identity be tolerated, but rather apostasy must be directly confronted and prevented.

Richard Bond, Virginia Wesleyan College

“‘Most Villainously Detaining’: English and Spanish Captives in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic”

In 1748, Alexander de la Torre, a dark-skinned Spanish freeman, was captured by an English privateer, brought to New York City, and condemned a slave. Three years later, John Gasney of Boston was seized by a Spanish ship of war and held prisoner in Havana. Both men spent much of their captivity protesting their status – filing court petitions, seeking allies, and declaring their freedom as subjects to a foreign crown; eventually, both men were freed. A similar fate confronted hundreds, possibly thousands, of Spanish and English men during this time of war. The paper that I am proposing investigates the captivity experiences of these eighteenth-century British, American, and Spanish subjects.

The paper will explore tentative answers to two questions. The first is the relationship between imperial subjecthood, race, and the law. Systems of law permitted the taking of prisoners, yet the captives’ experiences testify to the fluidity of the process. English, Spanish, and Portuguese captives all used the notion of imperial subjecthood as a means to contest their imprisonment, and their, at times, successful defense reveals important dynamics in how race and identity continued to be constructed in the eighteenth century. Moreover, the stories of their captivities can also be used to interrogate the ways in which English and Spanish captives and captors shaped their imperial, racial, and personal identities in light of one another. From the possibilities of violence to the trans-

imperial bonds formed by rebellion, the captives' experiences reveal a number of interesting avenues for exploring imperial identities.

Jeff Fortin, State University of New York at Oneonta

“African-American Imperialism: Creating the Black Atlantic World, 1795–1817”

In April 1811, African-American merchant Paul Cuffe arrived in Sierra Leone after having left Massachusetts to determine the viability of settling West Africa with free African-Americans. Expecting to encounter moral and sober individuals who would serve as a model for Africans involved in the slave trade, Cuffe instead found Black Loyalists, and pagan and Muslim native Africans all being policed by Maroons from Jamaica. This motley population, he determined, must be organized under a “Civilized power” if Sierra Leone were to arise as the first free and independent black nation on the eastern side of the Atlantic.

In this paper I argue that the attempted “civilization of Africa” by African-American emigrationists such as Paul Cuffe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was built on the foundation of earlier imperial expansion in the Atlantic world. Scholars have traditionally viewed this era as the origin of pan-Atlantic black nationalism that would come to dominate black political thought in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, when reconsidering this era in the history of the Atlantic world it is clear that Cuffe and others intended to create a new nation in West Africa that rested on decidedly American values. African-American emigrationists like Cuffe, who was a Quaker, sought to convert native West Africans into Christians in order to teach them the Jeffersonian virtues of self-government, free labor, and legitimate trade. Furthermore, by civilizing Africa, they predicted, abolitionists could attack the illegal transatlantic slave trade at its source by teaching African slave brokers the immorality of their business.

Session Two: Imperial Strategies

Mark Meuwese, University of Winnipeg

**“Underestimating the Natives:
Revisiting the Dutch West India Company's Failure to Capture the Portuguese Empire in
the Southern Atlantic, 1623–1626”**

This paper examines the diplomatic encounters between the WIC and Native peoples during the Company's ‘Great Design’, the ambitious plan to take over the Iberian Empire on both sides of the Southern Atlantic during the early 1620s. In 1623, the WIC launched three simultaneous assaults on Iberian strongholds in Brazil and West Africa. Although historians have described the spectacular WIC attacks before, none have highlighted the important role of Native peoples in the Dutch

attacks.¹ One expedition that attempted capture the strategic Portuguese fort Elmina on the Gold Coast was ambushed by local West African allies of the Portuguese. Using the Portuguese diplomatic relationship with local West African kingdoms, the commander of Elmina persuaded native warriors to annihilate the WIC force. During the same time, another WIC expedition invaded Salvador de Bahia, a rich export harbor of sugar and the capital of colonial Brazil. Although the WIC forces quickly captured the city, local Portuguese colonists put up an effective guerilla war against the Dutch. Contrary to WIC expectations, the local Tupi-speaking Indians did not welcome the Dutch as liberators from supposed Iberian tyranny but instead supported the Portuguese. Ironically, after the WIC was forced to return Bahia to a joint Portuguese-Spanish force in April 1625, one Company expedition succeeded in establishing a strategic alliance with coastal Tupis in the captaincy of Paraíba. A delegation of these Tupis traveled to the Republic to forge closer ties with the WIC.

Finally, a third WIC expedition targeted Luanda, the center of the Portuguese Atlantic slave trade. After a failed naval attack on the port-town, the WIC commander attempted to establish a diplomatic alliance with the kingdom of Congo. Shortly before the WIC's 'Great Design', Congolese noblemen had sent letters to Dutch officials, proposing a Congolese-Dutch attack on Luanda. However, by the time the WIC expedition arrived, local Portuguese officials had persuaded the king of Congo to refrain from this plan by mending the strained relationship through the distribution of a generous amount of trade goods. Moreover, a personal succession within the Congolese royal family had resulted in a more conciliatory policy toward the Portuguese. This chapter analyzes why WIC relations with native peoples remained so problematic during the Company's 'Great Design'. One important explanation for the failure of WIC diplomacy appears to be the Company's underestimation of Portuguese relations with native peoples. While the Dutch were relatively novel at establishing contacts with non-European peoples, the Portuguese had maintained relations with Native peoples in Brazil and West Africa since the early fifteenth century. Moreover, as long as the WIC remained primarily a maritime power rather than a territorial one in the Atlantic, Native peoples were reluctant to throw their support behind the Dutch.

Lauren Benton, New York University

“Island Chains: Penal Colonies and Imperial Sovereignty, 1780-1840”

This paper explores the comparative legal history of European convict transportation, with special emphasis on representations of island penal colonies as sites of legal anomaly. The paper briefly traces the emergence in the late eighteenth century of the transportation of convicts from Spain to sites in the Spanish empire, then presents several cases showing that civilian convicts placed under military authority in colonial presidios were in a state of legal limbo. The Spanish experience is compared with the application of martial law by the British in Norfolk Island. Otherwise very different Spanish and British examples of penal settlements posed some similar legal problems. The application of military rule and martial law challenged the viability of imperial constitutions by

¹ For the WIC's 'Great Design', see Henk den Heijer, "Bewindhebbers, gouverneurs en raden van bestuur (Het bestuur van de West-Indische Compagnie in de Republiek en in Brazilië)," in Marianne L. Wiesebron, ed., *Brazilië in de Nederlandse archieven (1624-1654): De West-Indische Compagnie. Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren uit Brazilië en Curacao (OBP)*, Mauritiana 2N (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 2005): 17-42, especially 27-30. For the Dutch primary sources about the WIC attack on West Africa, see also L.M. Akveld, ed., *Journal van de Reis van Piet Heyn naar Brazilië en West Afrika, 1624-1625* (Groningen: J.B. Wolters, 1962); Henk den Heijer, ed., *Expeditie naar de Goudkust: Het journaal van Jan Dircksz Lam over de Nederlandse aanval op Elmina (1625-1626)*, Linschoten-Vereeniging (Zutphen: Walburg Press, 2006).

raising questions about the continuity of subjects' rights across disparate parts of empire, the reach of executive power into distant enclaves, and the potential for jurisdictional autonomy to engender extra-legal violence.

Session Three: Transforming Local Identities

Sebastian Marc Barreveld, Stanford University

“Can Leopards lose their spots? The education of Ambonese children in the United Provinces, 1621–1629”

The question posed in the title of this paper was asked rhetorically in 1634 by the Governor of the island of Ambon upon the occasion of the return of a group of native children who had spent eight years studying theology, language, and culture in the United Provinces. In Governor Philip Lucasz.'s opinion, the Dutch had failed in this attempt at manufacturing cultural intermediaries for the merchants and missionaries living on the strategically and commercially important island of Ambon.

Like other maritime empires before them, the Dutch experimented with the domestic training of indigenous people from the Americas, Africa, and the East Indies. In this paper, I use printed works as well as original research in national and local archives to examine the case of one group of Ambonese children who were brought United Provinces between 1621 and 1629. In addition to tracing the political, economic, and religious motivations for bring them to the Netherlands, I illustrate how the particular personalities of V.O.C. functionaries guided their education, and, by extension, overseas policy in general. Although this project ultimately failed, I argue that this was a critical component of early Dutch imperial policy, and furthermore, that it was informed by a Calvinist missionary theology unique to the Dutch Reformed Church. More broadly, this paper contributes empirically and conceptually to the discussion of “cross-cultural encounter” by looking comparatively at the phenomena of the education (or re-education) of colonial peoples in Europe by France, England, and the Iberian Powers.

Zoltán Biedermann, Center for Overseas History, Lisbon

“Manipulating Identities: Princely Conversions in Early Colonial Sri Lanka (1500–1650)”

Although religious identities played no significant role in the earliest phase of Luso-Lankan relations, they developed into a central issue by the 1540s, when the Portuguese authorities in Goa began to ponder the possibility of intervening militarily in Ceylon in order to support Catholic proselitism. Whilst the King of Kotte, Bhuvanekabahu VII, remained reluctant to convert until his death in 1551, an increasing number of younger throne candidates did, in fact, take baptism in the hope of receiving Portuguese military support for their personal political projects. This was often accompanied by temporary exile in South India and, to some extent, by cultural conversion.

However, a number of baptized Lankan princes also managed to return to Ceylon in triumph, becoming instrumental for the political strategies of the Portuguese in Ceylon.

The success of such strategies diminished drastically amid the stiffening atmosphere of Habsburg imperialism after the Union of Iberian Crowns in 1580. A new policy was put into practice in Ceylon from the 1590s. Instead of developing the mechanisms of indirect domination that the Portuguese Crown had explored during the earlier decades, the Habsburg authorities set out to conquer the island in order to administer it directly. Even as Catholics, princes of royal Lankan lineage were now forced into long-term exile, their hybrid identity being perceived as a threat rather than an opportunity for the consolidation and legitimation of colonial power. This change in policy brought along a lasting rupture in the political cultures of both Sri Lanka and the Portuguese Empire.

Poppy Fry, Saint Anselm College

“The ‘Fingo Emancipation’ of 1835 and the Development of Cape Liberalism”

Recent historiography has largely dismissed Cape Liberalism as a hollow or deceptive ideology which failed to stem the tide of racist exploitation in South Africa during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This paper will argue that such a teleological critique fails to deal adequately with the first half of the nineteenth century. The 1835 “Fingo Emancipation” witnessed the arrival of nearly 20,000 Africans in the Cape Colony under a dispensation that promised political equality with white settlers. Using the “emancipation” as a case study in the theory and politics of imperial inclusion, this paper will demonstrate that the principles of Cape Liberalism—equality before the law and universal rationality—carried real weight with both Britons and Africans. Both the “emancipation” and the Fingo community it nurtured were predicated on a mutual recognition of similarity between the British and those who identified as Fingo. This cross-cultural connection, understood in terms of economic rationality, represented both a major triumph of Cape Liberalism and a significant moment in the development of the Cape Liberal tradition. The “emancipation” was also a defining moment for Fingo identity. Fingo-ness came to be defined in terms not only of local interactions but also of a broader imperial community.

Session Four: Framing Empire

Anya Zilberstein, Concordia University

“England is Like this a Cold Northern Country’: Natural History, Climate, and the Idea of Regions in the British Empire”

Naturalists and agricultural scientists (‘naturalist-improvers’) in eighteenth century Europe and North America proposed a biogeographical understanding of the world. In their correspondence and publications they compared the soils, flora and fauna, seasons, and productive potential of regional environments with similar latitudes or weather patterns. Naturalist-improvers

who governed, owned property, or traveled in places like the Scottish Highlands or New England were particularly concerned to describe the characteristics of northern environments to contradict popular notions that these regions were troubled by severe winters and poor land. What they could not contradict they would change. By applying scientific principles to land management, naturalist-improvers optimistically believed they could counteract the disadvantages of cold climates. My talk considers how visitors and settlers in northern places conceived of their geographical situation within the empire in environmental terms, and what such conceptions reveal about relationships between nature, empire, and identity. Naturalist-improvers frequently referred to a ‘north,’ ‘northern country,’ or ‘northern climate’ without a consistent indication of what the boundaries were of this supposed north: it could refer to a particular town, or as a shorthand for a particular province, or to any place with the reputation for cold weather from northeastern America to Novaya Zemlya. I will focus on observations about, and recommendations for improving, northern environments that became targets of ambitious British colonial development schemes. I suggest that 1) naturalist-improvers forged a trans-Atlantic community through such scientific activities, and 2) with science sought to transform their localities into identifiable landscapes of the British empire.

Giancarlo L. Casale, University of Minnesota

“Empires of the Mind in Tunuslu Hajji Ahmed’s World Map”

The subject of my proposed paper is the world map of Tunuslu Hajji Ahmed, a work that ranks, by almost any measure, as one of the most unusual geographical accomplishments of the early modern period. Created in an unknown Venetian workshop in 1559, it features an exceptionally beautiful heart-shaped projection of the world based on a prototype by the French cartographer and mathematician Oronce Finé, but also includes an extensive accompanying text composed entirely in Ottoman Turkish. As such, it counts as the first printable Turkish-language map designed for publication and sale on the Ottoman market, as well as one of the earliest attempts of any kind to adapt Western printing technology to the special requirements of Arabic script.

Yet because the map’s accompanying text also includes the extraordinary claim that it was the work of a Tunisian Muslim who was captured by pirates and sold into slavery in Venice, most modern studies of its contents have been limited to attempts to either prove or disprove this sensational scholarly attribution. My paper, rather than further engaging such debates about the map’s “authenticity,” will instead focus on what the text actually says about the world of the mid sixteenth century. As perhaps the first example of a geographical work created in a Western European workshop for a specifically non-Western audience, I argue that it provides us with a unique opportunity to examine how both Ottomans and Europeans imagined themselves in relationship to one another and to the rest of the world during the high water mark of the 16th-century “Age of Exploration.”

Session Five: Trades and Traders

Peter Mark, Wesleyan University and Jose da Silva Horta, Universidade de Lisboa

“New Christian and Jewish Weapons Traders in 17th-century West Africa: From Lisbon to Amsterdam to Marrakesh to Senegal”

Recently discovered archival sources of the Lisbon Inquisition dating from 1619, document the production of short swords, or ‘armas brancas,’ by Lisbon-based New Christians. Transported to Portuguese/Dutch Jewish merchants who had settled on the Senegalese coast by 1608, the weapons were traded to West Africans, in return for slaves. This commerce contravened a Papal Bull that prohibited Christians from trading weapons to Muslims. Nevertheless, the commerce in swords and daggers, previously unknown to historians of West Africa, is corroborated by Portuguese travel narratives from the period 1590-1625.

New Christian contractors in Lisbon provided 600 swords annually to Senegambia. They sub-contracted production to specialists in Italy and Antwerp, but the daggers were assembled in Lisbon. This trade developed shortly after 1590, in response to international commercial, military, and diplomatic factors that involved Amsterdam, Morocco, and West Africa. In Morocco, the rapid development of a modern armaments industry under Ahmed Al-Mansour, followed in 1591 by Mansour’s invasion of the ‘sahel’ and the defeat of the Songhai Empire, brought thousands of ‘armas brancas’ across the Sahara, disrupted the military balance of power there, and created a burgeoning African demand for weapons, from Mali to Senegal. The arrival of Dutch-Jewish merchants on Senegal’s coast in 1608, along with the establishment of diplomatic missions between Morocco and Amsterdam (led by the Moroccan-Dutch Jew Samuel Pallache), in 1609, ensured the rapid circulation of information about demand for new trade items in West Africa, and created commercial networks that could bypass the Papal Bull and the Inquisition. Central to these networks were Jewish merchant families with commercial ties in Lisbon, Amsterdam, Fez, Marrakesh, and Senegal.

George Bryan Souza, University of Texas at San Antonio

“Sri Lankan Cinnamon, the Mahabadda, the Portuguese and the Company: Commerce and Communal Relations, c. 1590–c. 1690”

Cinnamon is a spice from the bark of a variety of the cassia family found only on Sri Lanka. From the 14th century onwards, the collection of cinnamon was exclusively in the hands of one communal group, the Salagama or cinnamon peelers caste, who would annually deliver the spice in kind to local rulers as part of the *Mahabadda* or “Great Tax” system.

Cinnamon was the commodity with a global demand that attracted initially the Portuguese Crown and merchants to establish a presence in the maritime regions of the island. It was over the control and commercialization of cinnamon that forces of the Dutch East India Company (the Company), joined by the King of Kandy’s Sinhalese troops, eventually evicted and replaced the Portuguese, after nearly xx years of intermittent warfare. The Company’s monopoly of Sri Lankan cinnamon was one of the cornerstones of its commercial success.

Based upon Portuguese and Dutch archival records, this paper examines the continuity and change in the collection or delivery of cinnamon by the Salagama caste within the *Mahabadda* system in the pre-European, late-Portuguese and early-Dutch periods. The dromography or the logistics of the supply of cinnamon is examined vis-à-vis the demand that was present in Europe, Asia, and America. It also pays particular attention to the demography of the Salagama, including their social organization, the number, physical distribution, and mapping of villages, attempts at social engineering by the Portuguese and/or Dutch to increase deliveries and the redress or resistance strategies employed by the cinnamon peelers and how those were received by Portuguese or Dutch colonial administrators.

Henriette de Bruyn Kops, Georgetown University

**“Seaborne Imperialists or Tightfisted Opportunists?
Conflicting Images of the Dutch in the 17th Century”**

In the first half of the seventeenth century, against all odds, the people of the northern Netherlands forged a maritime empire. Publicly emphasizing those character traits that allowed them to be so successful, the Dutch also invented themselves as a nation. Success triggered myriad reactions, at home and abroad, ranging from hubristic expressions of self-satisfaction to hostile denigrations by outsiders. Jesuit priests in Asia, Englishmen, and Frenchmen bitterly complained of the unsavory habits and unfair business practices of the Dutch. At the same time these foreign detractors acknowledged the Dutch hegemony and urged their compatriots to emulate the methods of the cheeseheads. So what were the Dutch – bold builders of empire or tightfisted shopkeepers?

Contradictory images and messages abound. Despite the awareness that global power depended on a strong naval presence, stingy provincial contributions to the federal treasury undermined the naval power so essential to imperium. At the same time, the Dutch merchant-elite built magnificent houses along urban canals in Batavia and at home, financed the construction of a palatial Town Hall in Amsterdam, and splurged on art and exotic artifacts. Money was lavished on individual or municipal projects that bolstered the image of the man, just not on state-directed imperialism, no matter how shortsighted that may have been.

Using a combination of eye-witness accounts plus visual records, this paper will discuss both the ways in which the people who created the Dutch Republic and its seaborne empire chose to present themselves, as well as the manner in which they were described and depicted by others.

Session Six: Views of Empire

Eleanor Hughes, Yale Center for British Art

“Classical Orient, Romantic Orient: 18th-Century British Visual Culture and the Levant”

This paper focuses on an exhibition I am currently curating at the Yale Center for British Art, *Pearls to Pyramids: British visual culture and the Levant, 1600-1830* (7 February – 27 April, 2008). The exhibition explores intersections between British visual culture and the countries of the eastern Mediterranean beginning in the early seventeenth century, when political and economic shifts enabled Britain to reassert itself as a dominant presence in the Mediterranean trade that had long been monopolized by Venice. As a field of inquiry this region and period have tended to be eclipsed by interest, on the one hand, in imperial histories of the British in India and, on the other, by the later nineteenth-century orientalism of British (and European) painters who traveled to Egypt and the Holy Land. The paper will present a diverse array of visual material – including paintings, prints, illustrated books, and drawings made on archaeological expeditions – to make the case that the increasing interest in the Middle East in the eighteenth century, and particularly in classical and biblical sites, was central to the formation of Britain’s identity as an imperial power. Some of the complexities involved in curating an exhibition on this topic will also be addressed.

Phyllis Hunter, University of North Carolina Greensboro

“From Massachusetts to Madras: Renegotiating Identity in the First British Empire”

“Born in America, in Europe bred, In Africa travell’d and in Asia wed,” so read Elihu Yale’s epitaph. Best known to Americanists for his bequest to Yale College, Yale played an important role in the expansion of British commerce into Asia during the late seventeenth century. Born in Puritan New England, educated in London, Yale pursued wealth and power for twenty-five years at the East India Company factory called Fort St. George in Madras, India. On leaving India, he retired to England, and through large dowries, married his daughters into the aristocracy. His life story provides an ideal laboratory for exploring issues of empire and identity. Yale moved from colonial subject in America, to imperial agent in India, and finally to metropolitan nabob. In each of these positions, he refashioned his identity, consciously and unconsciously, in response to multiple claims and desires.

Using Yale’s personal papers, Records of Fort St. George and other East India Company records, traveler’s accounts, and other primary sources, this paper will explore the influences of religion, empire, commerce, and cosmopolitanism through the lens of Yale’s experiences.

At Madras, Yale inhabited a remarkably diverse community peopled with native clothworkers, Indian merchants, Portuguese and Indo-Portuguese families, Armenian and Jewish traders, English soldiers and merchants, and the clerks, council and Governor of Fort St. George. In that complex environment, Yale developed a cosmopolitan outlook at odds with his Puritan

upbringing, entering into private partnerships with Indian merchants, arguing for incorporating Hindu ritual into the English municipal courts, and taking a Jewish lover. On his return to England he curried favor with Princes and noblemen and amassed an enormous collection of English and European objects in an effort to once again renegotiate his identity. Yale's career argues for a more complex and variable historicizing of identity and interaction—one that goes well beyond the dichotomy of us or them—in understanding the workings of empire.

Amélia Polónia, University of Porto

“Global and Local Interactions in the Portuguese Overseas Empire: Networks and Cooperation Patterns in the Construction of Social Identities of Seafaring Communities”

The global interactions of Portuguese overseas expansion in the political, economic and scientific domains are well known, and have been extensively analysed in a vast number of national and international studies. However, the internal interactions of the same phenomenon in Portuguese society, particularly in seaport and maritime communities, the very communities which sustained overseas expansion in the 15th and the 16th centuries with human and material resources, have, on the contrary, been practically ignored.

The paper will focus on the construction of local identities, directly framed by the experience of overseas navigation and trade. The analysis will be centred on Portuguese maritime communities involved in overseas shipping and trade routes during the 16th and 17th centuries. Its conclusions were drawn from an analysis of documental corpora that include notarised deeds, parish records, town council minutes, tax registers, Inquisition proceedings, central archive documents and legislative corpora covering the period from 1500 to 1640.

What we intend to discuss is how the particular conditions of Portuguese expansion were bound to have major and structural impacts on maritime communities, not only on the economic level, but also in the political, demographic and social spheres, providing a common framework to explore the construction of group identities, namely, those of seamen, a dominant group in maritime communities.

The issue at hand is inextricably related to a broader question: that of maritime dynamics as a globalisation agent in the Early Modern period. Are the performances and profiles of seamen, their common maritime experiences, their singularity in relation to a broader maritime society, determinant factors of specificity and micro-identities, or are these factors, due to their international dimension, able to point to a “globalisation” of values, professional frameworks, familial, social, demographic and religious behaviours? Are they furthermore responsible for codes of solidarity that extrapolate geographical and political boundaries, or even confessional ones?

Session Seven: Commodities and Objects

Elizabeth Sutton, University of Iowa

“Natural History and Ethnography: Classifying Animals, Plants, and Africans in Early Modern Dutch Travel Accounts”

This paper engages the contemporary themes of race, ethnography, and science by examining their roots at the turn of the seventeenth century and the significance of visual culture in their formation. The engravings in Pieter de Marees' 1602 *Beschryvinghe ende historische verhael vant Gout Koninckrijk van Gunea* exemplify the profound shift in how the Dutch would come to classify their expanding world. As the first Dutch account on Africa, these book illustrations tell us about the culture that produced them and about how visual images repeated over time affected how African peoples were perceived and treated. Authors of ethnographical compendia and authors of botanical and zoological compendia followed very similar models. The traditional frameworks that early modern ethnographers utilized shaped how in later centuries humankind was classified and how “race” came to be primarily a visually-based essentialist idea.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the essentialist position which focused on a biological, physical conception of race was not yet articulated. However, over the years of initial contact and through the structure and dissemination of various visual stereotypes associated with cultural characteristics, the physicality of “race” became codified. By the end of the eighteenth century, distinct races classified by geography, morphology, and characteristic “tendencies” were articulated.²

The images of Africans in early modern accounts such as the *Beschryvinghe* exemplify *how* pictures, particularly those readily available to scholars and the populace in printed books, shaped Europeans' conceptions of non-Europeans in the early years of contact.

Michelle Craig McDonald, Stockton College

(co-author Steven Topik, University of California Irvine could not attend)

“From Imperial to National Commodity: How Coffee’s Identity Was Repackaged”

This paper explores how an African plant, transplanted to the Caribbean and Central and South America by several European empires, became a symbol of North American identity and economic growth by the mid-nineteenth century. American revolutionaries used coffee as a patriotic proxy for tea to symbolize independence from British imperial authority during the economic embargoes of the 1760s; early republic politicians and merchants held it up as a key foreign-produced trade good while debating the pros and cons of diplomatic overtures to Europe’s

² The system of taxonomic classification was articulated by the famous botanist Carl Linné (Linnaeus 1707-1778) in *Systema Naturae* in 1735. Linnaeus classified *homo sapiens* into the different “races” of *Africanus*, *Asiaticus*, *Americanus*, and *Europeanus*.

Atlantic-based colonies; and nineteenth-century western promoters incorporated it as an image of rugged individualism to promote America's expansion into the frontier and overseas. Thus coffee was linked to American state formation, nation building, continentalism, and imperialism.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the United States was the world's largest coffee importer and re-exporter though, until the annexation of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Manila in the 1890s, the U.S. never produced coffee itself. Despite America's dependence on foreign production, however, coffee's overseas origins became increasingly erased. This paper uses trade patterns, political debates, advertising strategies, and artifacts to reconstruct the symbolic relationship of coffee to colonial rivalries and the formation of national identity. Its conclusions diverge sharply from the usual "dependentista" view that trade and colonialism led to dependence, not nation and state building.

Christina Folke Ax, University of Copenhagen

"Objects of Empire and the Construction of Identity in 18th-century Colonial Iceland"

In the 18th century, Iceland was a dependency of Denmark. To the majority of the Icelanders, though, Denmark was far away and a few merchants and officials were the only representatives of Denmark and Danish culture Icelanders came into contact with. Danish culture and language, however, came to form an important part of Icelandic society and the way Icelanders related to each other. This paper will examine how the Icelanders responded to the presence of the Danish colonial power in the 18th century, and how they incorporated objects representing Denmark and a Danish way of life into an Icelandic context. The aim is to show that there were many ways of understanding Denmark and Danish way of living, and that the use of objects that represented Danish culture were ascribed different symbolic value according to the situation in which they were used and the people using them. Thus, the Icelandic understanding of Danish material culture and language was multi-faceted. It served as an important contrast in defining what was seen as Icelandic culture, it was a sign of both distinction and depravation, and it was an important part in creating an Icelandic urban culture and identity. The paper will, thus, focus on the creativeness of the Icelanders in dealing with the presence of a foreign power in their own society and show the ways in which the objects of the empire was used in the construction of Icelandic identities.

Session Eight: Conflict on the Margins

Matthew Restall, Pennsylvania State University

"Yucatan and Belize: A New History of a Forgotten Frontier"

The shifting frontier between the Spanish colony of Yucatan and the British settlement of Belize has been ignored by historians of Yucatan as marginal to the province, while being distorted in the triumphal historiography of Belize. In reality, the region was the stage of a British-Spanish

cold war, with regular “hot” moments, from the late-seventeenth century to the 1820s, and was taken far more seriously at the time than modern historians have imagined.

This paper will be my first presentation of new work on Yucatan and Belize in the eighteenth century. I will argue that the frontier saw more violent conflict—and yet paradoxically also more trade and migration—than has hitherto been recognized. Yucatan and Belize posed significant threats to each other, and had massive impacts on each other’s development as colonies. Above all, African slaves and their free descendents played a major role in the story.

John Savage, Lehigh University

“Sacred Science in Slave Society: ‘Poison’ and Identity in Martinique”

The phenomenon of poisonings committed by enslaved people, targeting fellow slaves, livestock or white masters, has been clearly identified throughout the early modern Atlantic World. This paper examines the unusual case of slave poisoning in Martinique during the early 19th century. Where scholars have long argued that such practices were dramatically in decline by this time, Martinique underwent a wave of poisonings that locals claimed was unprecedented, threatening the very survival of the colony. Yet research also reveals a skeptical backlash on the part of some visitors, medical doctors, and metropolitan administrator, who claimed poisoning was not in fact behind most of the deaths it was blamed for. This paper examines this controversy in relation to the question of slave and creole identities in Martinique. Of course, poisoning and other slave practices can be linked to the “sacred science” of West African societies. But to what extent was poisoning evidence of the survival of African cultures in the Caribbean, as recent scholarship has claimed? The paper argues that while Igbo and other African practices influenced the poisoning phenomenon, poisoning reveals a dramatic transformation of slave and creole identities in response to the specific context of early 19th century French slave society.

Allan Dwyer, Memorial University of Newfoundland

**“‘The most outrageous Set of People’:
British Imperial Identity and the Newfoundland Irish Threat, 1740–1800”**

By 1750, about two thousand Irish “Papists” were traveling annually to the Newfoundland fishery, both as migratory labourers, and as emigrant-passengers. Though the Irish from the Waterford hinterland had a long tradition of foreign travel for pilgrimages, military service, and commerce, Newfoundland was different. Unlike the Catholic countries of Europe where previous waves of Irish had gone to pray, study and fight, Newfoundland was a strategic part of the new British North America.

These Irish thus presented a thorny problem for the Navy, which administered Newfoundland, and for Whitehall, from whence the increasingly complex British project, with its nascent ideas of Imperial identity and Protestant destiny, was being managed. By 1761 the Naval governor estimated darkly that there were three Catholics to every Protestant on the large island. Newfoundland marked the first time considerable numbers of Catholic Irish emigrated to a key part of the burgeoning Empire and formed permanent communities. But this was not Kilkenny: these

frontier Irish Papists carried guns and began to openly practice their religion. The fragile Imperial ego demanded that the threat be controlled.

A survey of the Imperial response to the Newfoundland Irish yields fresh insights into how British administrators sought to project, through legal and other means, a vision of Imperial authority and Protestant society in this important Atlantic borderland region. In order to keep Newfoundland British, the English authorities needed to prevent the Irish from amassing any commercial control in the fisheries, and needed to curtail their Catholic religion. The English thus transferred to the New World, as an Imperial strategy, their effective and operative hatred of the Irish.

Banquet and Keynote Address

Kris Lane, President of FEEGI, College of William and Mary:

**“Everybody Must Get Stoned:
Rock Medicine in the Early Modern World”**

Among the many global exchanges to grow exponentially after European voyages of discovery and conquest was that of drugs. These included not only a huge variety of mostly tropical plants, herbs, barks, and seedpods, but also a number of minerals. Although interest in crystals as agents of medical therapy has been revived in recent years among New Age enthusiasts, most early modern therapeutic uses of stones, metals, rare earths, and mineral concretions have been forgotten. This talk explores select 'rock therapies' that crossed oceans in an era of global galenic science.