

Report on the second SAAH

Galway, Ireland

26 May – 28 May 2011

by Susanne Lachenicht (Bayreuth University)

The 2011 edition of the Summer Academy of Atlantic History (SAAH) was organized and hosted by Professor Nicholas CANNY, Director of the Moore Institute for Research in the Humanities and Social Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway, and, until March 2011, President of the Royal Irish Academy. As well as providing the selected students with an opportunity to present their on-going doctoral research and engage in discussions with tutors and their fellow students – not only during panels but also during generous conference dinners and a tour through Connemara –, this year's SAAH also hosted three keynote speakers in order to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Moore Institute: Professor Philip MORGAN (Johns Hopkins University), Professor Emma ROTHSCILD (Harvard University) and Professor Bartolomé YUN-CASALILLA, (European University Institute, Florence). The keynote lectures were open to a wider academic and public audience. Another feature of the SAAH was the launch of the Oxford Handbook on the History of the Atlantic World c 1450-1840 edited by Professors Nicholas CANNY and Philip MORGAN.

In 'Brokers in Trade & Commerce' Emily BUCHNEA (Nottingham) reported on her PhD project on the Liverpool-New York Trading Community (1763-1833) and Jesse CROMWELL (U Texas, Austin) on the contraband trade in Venezuela (1680-1800). Professor Claudia SCHNURMANN (Universitaet Hamburg) commented on the two papers. Emily BUCHNEA examined how Liverpool and New York merchants could guarantee quality standards for their products in long distance trade and to what extent trading partners were able to rely on "trust relations". Jesse CROMWELL highlighted that foreign contraband trade from the Caribbean islands undermined Spain's commercial monopoly in Latin America. His dissertation is a social history of diverse groups – government officials, smugglers and colonial merchants – involved in the process of supplying Venezuela with the necessary commodities. It emphasizes as much as Emily BUCHNEA's paper the necessarily inter- and even suprainperial aspects of Atlantic trade in the early modern era.

Professor Philip MORGAN's keynote lecture on "Eighteenth-Century St Croix: Microcosm of Atlantic Slavery and the Plantation System" provided new insights into the interrelatedness of landscape, soil, slave ownership, ethnically and confessionally diverse planters and plantation systems on the Caribbean island of St. Croix. Relying on rich if not abundant archival sources, this work in progress allows a thorough micro-analysis of the rise and transformation of slave holder societies and African Caribbean slave societies.

The second panel "Brokers in Religious Worlds" featured Katharine GERBNER'S (Harvard University) "From Literacy to the Crucifixion: Moravian Mission Strategy in St. Thomas and Jamaica, 1732-1760" and Roxana NAKASHIMA'S (EHESS, Paris) "Emblematic English seafarers in the context of the religious conflicts and the economical rivalries in Europe, 1585-1660" with comments by Professors Hermann WELLENREUTHER (Universitaet Goettingen) and Susanne LACHENICHT. GERBNER's dissertation is a comparative analysis of the Quakers', the Anglican church's and the Moravians' attitudes towards slave-holding in the Caribbean and on the North American mainland. Taking into consideration these groups' distinct theologies, the study will provide important new insights into the competition for

souls in the colonies. Roxana NAKASHIMA's dissertation – which is still in its early stages – deals with the establishment of legal, national and religious boundaries in the Atlantic world, boundaries drawn between the Spanish and the English empires. Looking at the Spanish inquisition's records and English seafarers' eyewitness accounts, NAKASHIMA could offer a better knowledge of processes of "othering" which served the establishment of imperial ideologies and, finally, the shaping of distinct empires in the Atlantic world.

"Science and Knowledge" presented new work on the transfer of ideas, knowledge and goods between North America and Europe. Anna GROEBEN (Universitaet Hamburg) introduced "Christoph Daniel Ebeling's and Matthias Sprengel's contributions to the development of American Studies" in the context of the late Enlightenment and the American and French revolutions. Ebeling and Sprengel aimed both at the transformation of the German political system and greater knowledge within the German-speaking world of what would later be termed "America". As such they had a lasting impact on German ideas of what "America" (i.e. the rising United States of America) was (supposed to be) about. Christopher PARSONS' (Toronto/Dartmouth) "Plants and Peoples: Reconceptualizing the history of indigenous knowledge in the French Atlantic World" rightly emphasized that European knowledge of the flora of the Americas by no means only relied on botanical sketches and scientific texts or the foundation of botanical gardens. Looking at indigenous and European contacts, that is inter alia of colonists, missionaries and explorers and how they adopted indigenous knowledge in the colonial context itself, PARSONS develops a much better informed history of the transfer of botanical and ecological knowledge in the colonial period. Comments were provided by Tim LOCKLEY (University of Warwick) and Ben MARSH (University of Stirling).

The panel "Brokers within Indigenous Worlds" with comments by Evan HAEFELI (Columbia University, NYC) and Lauric HENNETON (Université Versailles-St. Quentin) presented Gabriel ROCHA's (New York University) early stage analysis of how the Portuguese and Spanish defined "conquest" and practiced slavery on the Canary islands and in the Maghreb during the 1420s and 1430s. His PhD thesis takes on theories of a thread running from the crusades and the reconquista to the conquest of the New World. In order to provide an analysis of the ideologies and practices of conquest during these years, the dissertation places itself within a rather complicated web of different players, including the conquistadores, Spanish and Portuguese sailors, smugglers, Moors, Sephardi Jews and black slave traders. In his dissertation Christopher VERNON (University of Warwick) studies the role of "rumour" between the Cherokee nation and the British colonies in the south-eastern backcountry (1740-1785). The exchange of information through different brokers such as British and indigenous traders was vital for the co-existence of powerful indigenous groups and European colonists. Exchange of information at the time was based – as much as in Europe – on speech. In qualifying information as "news" or "rumour" colonial authorities tried to exert as much as official powers back in Europe control over the flow and the consequences of information.

In her keynote address under the title "The Old New Wars of the Eighteenth Century" Professor Emma ROTHSCHILD challenged the notion that the era of global wars relates necessarily to the era of American Independence and the Wars of the French Revolution. She argued that the colonial wars of the late 17th to the 18th century such as King William's War or the Nine Years War already involved powers and peoples to an extent that has often been attributed to a later era.

In the SAAH's fifth and final panel "Perceptions and (re-)constructions of new societies" Katherine JOHNSTON (Columbia University, New York) presented "Adaptations and

Relocations: Travelers's Changing Bodies in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World”, commented by Sarah BARBER (University of Lancaster). Still at an early stage of her dissertation, JOHNSTON asked about the terms and ideologies through which European colonists articulated their adaptation (or failure to adapt) to different climates and - as such – constructions of the self in new societies: was it by referring to humoral theory, to race, the nation and the homeland? Did these explanations vary according to the documents where we find them today: official letters to the government, private letters, diaries? Can we account for a development towards racial and biologicistic theories? Giovanni VENEGONI (Bologna) offered with his “Filibusters, smugglers and governors: economic and social relations among the Caribbean. Saint-Domingue, 1697-1763” a very different approach to the building of new societies in the Caribbean: the pre-Spanish and pre-French colonial society on the island of Saint-Domingue, interethnic and interracial relations between inhabitants of “fickle” origins. Nicholas CANNY commented on Giovanni VENEGONI’s paper.

The concluding keynote address was offered by Professor Bartolomé YUN-CASALILLA. In “The Atlantic in early modern Europe. Some new challenges to European social History” he first offered an overview of the state-of-the-art of the New Atlantic History and then moved on to how Atlantic History challenges common historical narratives within Europe. Atlantic History not only defies narratives of the nation-state as the most important framework of historical change. Atlantic History could also – as YUN-CASALILLA argued – reduce Europe to “provincialisation”: inter alia it might make evident that social and economic relations of Europeans with the Atlantic World have to be understood in local and regional entities, so that the nation-state or even the “trans-national” offer very little as categories through which we can analyse historical change within the Atlantic world.

This year’s SAAH was funded by the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Moore Institute, at NUI Galway as part of their celebration of 10 years of funding provided by the Irish government to the University both through the Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTL) administered by the Higher Education Authority and through the Irish Research Council in the Humanities and Social Studies. The event also enjoyed a subvention from the support provided to the Moore Institute by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to help the Institute internationalize its thrust. Student costs for the Summer Academy were covered by the European Early American Studies Association (EEASA) through an Arts and Humanities Research Council grant and the Lehrstuhl fuer Geschichte der Fruehen Neuzeit, Universitaet Bayreuth.

The next SAAH will be held in July 2013 and will be hosted by Professor Claudia SCHNURMANN, Universitaet Hamburg.

PROGRAMME

Thursday 26 May:

1:30-2pm Coffee on arrival

2-2:30pm Welcome Professor Nicholas CANNY, Professor Susanne LACHENICHT

2:30-4:30pm Panel 1: ‘Brokers in Trade & Commerce’

Emily BUCHNEA (Nottingham), "Bridging the Middle Atlantic: The Liverpool-New York Trading Community, 1763-1833" (comment: Claudia SCHNURMANN (Hamburg))

Jesse CROMWELL (U Texas Austin), "Covert Commerce: A Social History of Contraband Trade in Venezuela, 1680-1800" (comment: Claudia SCHNURMANN (Hamburg))

4:30-5pm Coffee

5:00-6:30pm Keynote Speaker: Prof. Philip MORGAN, Johns Hopkins University:
'Eighteenth-Century St Croix: Microcosm of Atlantic Slavery and the Plantation System'

6:30-7:30pm Launch of 'The Oxford Handbook of The Atlantic World 1450-1850' edited by
Nicholas CANNY & Philip MORGAN

Friday, 27 May

9-11am Panel 2: Brokers in Religious Worlds

Katharine GERBNER (Harvard) "From Literacy to the Crucifixion: Moravian Mission Strategy in St. Thomas and Jamaica, 1732-1760" (comment: Hermann WELLENREUTHER (Göttingen))

Roxana NAKASHIMA (EHES/Florence), "Emblematic English seafarers in the context of the religious conflicts and the economical rivalries in Europe, 1585-1660" (comment: Susanne LACHENICHT (Bayreuth))

11-11:30am Coffee

11:30am -1:30pm Panel 3: Science and Knowledge

Anna GROEBEN (Hamburg) "Christoph Daniel Ebeling and Matthias Sprengel contributions to the development of American Studies in the 18th century" (comment: Tim LOCKLEY (Warwick))

Christopher PARSONS (Toronto/Dartmouth) "Plants and Peoples: French and Indigenous Botanical Knowledge in colonial North America, 1600 - 1760" (comment: Ben MARSH (Stirling))

1:30-2:30pm Lunch

2:30-4:30pm Panel 4: Brokers within Indigenous Worlds

Gabriel ROCHA (NYU) "'À Négociier Tous les Jours': Conquest in the African Atlantic, 1415-1480" (comment: Evan HAEFELI (Columbia, NYC))

Christopher VERNON (Warwick) "Rumour between the Cherokee Nation and the British Colonies in the South-eastern Backcountry, 1740-1785" (comment: Lauric HENNETON (Versailles-St. Quentin))

4:30pm Coffee

5-6:30pm Keynote Speaker: Prof. Emma ROTHSCHILD, Harvard University: "The Old New Wars of the Eighteenth Century"

8pm Conference dinner

Saturday, 28 May

10-12am Panel 5: Perceptions and (re-)constructions of new societies

Katherine JOHNSTON (Columbia, NYC) "Adaptations and Relocations: Travelers's Changing Bodies in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World" (comment: Sarah BARBER (Lancaster))

Giovanni VENEGONI (Bologna) "Filibusters, smugglers and governors: economic and social relations among the Caribbean. Saint-Domingue, 1697-1763" (comment: Nicholas CANNY (Galway))

12-1:30pm Keynote Speaker: Prof. Bartolomé YUN-CASALILLA, European University Institute, Florence "The Atlantic in early modern Europe. Some new challenges to European social History"

1:30-2:30pm Lunch

2:30-6:30 Conference tour through Connemara

8:00 Concluding Conference Dinner