

SAMEMES

Medieval and Early Modern Swiss-British Relations

Swiss Association of Medieval and Early Modern English Studies
Eighth Biennial Conference
University of Basel
4-6 September 2024



Irish Gospel of St. Gall

Call for Papers

The next international SAMEMES conference will take place within the framework of the SNSF-project SwissBritNet: Swiss-British cultural exchange and knowledge networks 1600-1780. The conference will extend the investigation of these networks back through the Middle Ages.

The study of early modern transnational relations in Europe has been advanced in recent years by digital humanities initiatives enabling the large-scale collection, visualization and analysis of data designed to improve our understanding of knowledge networks and the Republic of Letters. Joining this international research community, SwissBritNet will highlight the nature and relevance of Swiss-British relations as an intrinsic part of a bigger European picture. While both continental Anglophilia and the British enthusiasm for Switzerland are often seen as late-18th century phenomena, this conference will show that they have a much longer and intricate history. From the 7th century Irish monks who established the monastery of St Gallen and the Bishop of Sion who helped found Westminster Abbey to the English envoys stationed in the Swiss confederacy in the 17th century, from the Genevan teacher Antoine-Rodolphe Chevalier, who was Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge in the reign of Edward VI to the English knowledge networks of Swiss theologians and scholars in the 17th and 18th centuries; from the Marian exiles in Basel and Geneva in the 1550s to Puritan regicides in Geneva and Lausanne – to name only a very few examples – there has been constant movement and cultural exchange between Switzerland and Britain, and considerable resulting mutual influence.

At the SAMEMES conference, we will be able to discuss medieval and early modern case studies as well as larger theoretical and methodological considerations, and the project database SwissBritNet will subsequently enable us to collect and link documents and stories that form part of this Swiss-British history (with an initial focus on early modern materials).¹

¹ Of course, Switzerland is not a stable nation and territory, its contours having changed drastically over time, but we will take modern Switzerland as a point of departure and certainly include the Old Confederacy plus Geneva and the Swiss Confederation after the peace of Westphalia. Ultimately, our approach here should be pragmatic.

Plenary Speakers

Ardis Butterfield, Yale University

Erin McCarthy, University of Galway

Annina Seiler, University of Zurich

Dirk van Miert, Huygens Instituut Amsterdam

Topics to be addressed may include, but are not limited to

Transmission of medieval manuscripts

Libraries and collections

Go-betweens and brokers of knowledge

Modes of exchange in the Republic of Letters

Drama and itinerant players

Translations of literary works and devotional literature

Travel accounts and letters

Economic relations, trade, crafts and art

Natural philosophy, medicine and science

Diplomacy and warfare

Religion and theology

Global Medieval Studies, Transnational Studies, Network Studies, Digital Humanities, and Gender Studies approaches are encouraged in the investigation of literary and cultural history.

Select papers presented at this conference will be edited by the conference organizers and published in the open access *Swiss Papers in English Language and Literature* (SPELL) in 2025.

SAMEMES invites early career members to submit their first single-authored book, written in English and published between March 2020 and December 2023, for the SAMEMES Book Prize (CHF1000). In order to enter the competition, candidates must be paid-up members of SAMEMES by the CFP deadline and attend the conference at which the prize is announced. Book prize submissions should be sent in hardcopy (**2 copies** please) by the CFP deadline to the SAMEMES president Prof. Kevin Curran, Section d'anglais, Lettres, Bâtiment Anthropole, Université de Lausanne, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland.

For **20-minute** conference papers, please send a 250-word abstract and a short bio (max 100 words) to Prof. Ina Habermann (ina.habermann@unibas.ch) by **March 16, 2024**. Please share this call widely. Doctoral students looking for travel support should get in touch with the organizers in very good time.

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Organisers: Prof. Ina Habermann, University of Basel; Prof. Elisabeth Dutton, Université de Fribourg

