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***'The Captive Alchemist as a Serial Convert:
Christian Wilhelm von Krohneman between Lutheranism and Catholicism'***

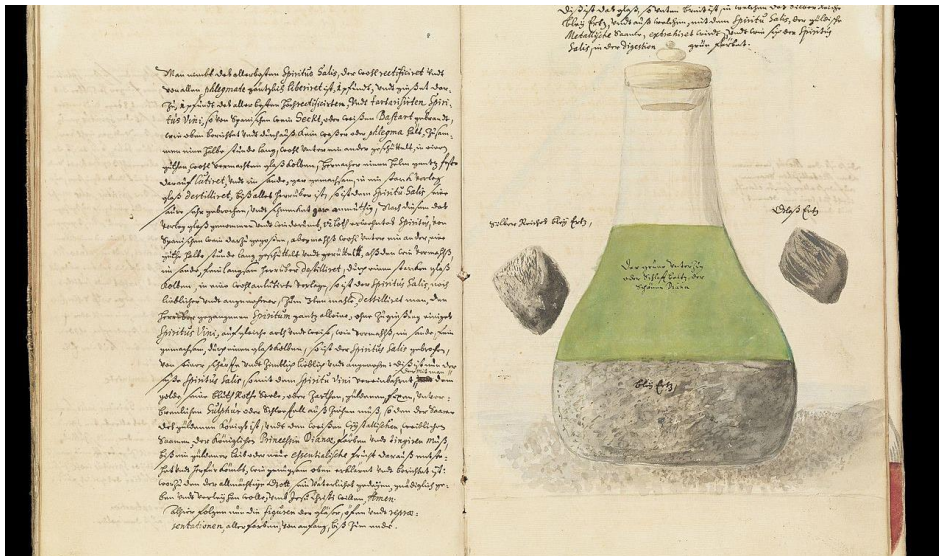
4pm Tuesday 7 September (Melbourne)

8am Tuesday 7 September (Rome)

11pm Monday 6 September (LA, USA)

To register: MEMS.seminar@acu.edu.au

Dr Mike A. Zuber is a Research Fellow at the University of Queensland's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities. He received his doctorate at the University of Amsterdam in 2017. Before joining the University of Queensland, he pursued postdoctoral research at the University of Oxford with funding from the Swiss National Science Foundation.



Abstract: The Captive Alchemist as a Serial Convert: Christian Wilhelm von Krohneman between Lutheranism and Catholicism

Born a Lutheran (or so he claimed), the soldier of fortune who became known as Baron Christian Wilhelm von Krohneman first converted to Catholicism as a prisoner of war captured by the French. Sometime in the early 1670s, he reinvented himself as a glamorous alchemist and tried his luck in Vienna. Having exhausted his Catholic patrons' patience, he made his way to the Lutheran territory of Brandenburg-Bayreuth. His rise at the court of Bayreuth was meteoric but also set him up for a catastrophic downfall: he was imprisoned for debt in December 1681. One month later, Krohneman converted to Lutheranism. After two years of captivity and illness, the alchemist once more tried to prove himself. Yet his best efforts failed and only ever produced gold that was too brittle to pass muster. Increasingly desperate, he escaped from the fortress in which he had been held for more than four years and sought asylum at a monastery in the Archbishopric of Bamberg. Hoping to avoid extradition, Krohneman converted back to Catholicism. His gambit failed, and he died on the gallows in April 1686. Based on detailed manuscript research, this paper provides an account of Krohneman's eventful life while focusing on his multiple conversions and the conversion advice he gave to others. It probes how Krohneman instrumentalized his shifting confessional allegiance to navigate adverse financial, political, and diplomatic circumstances. Ironically, it seems that this not overly pious alchemist grossly overestimated the importance his contemporaries would attach to his conversions.

© Wellcome Collection Library, London, MS. 3132: Christian Wilhelm von Krohneman, *Von der Universal-Tinctur*.