EMoDIR is an international research group focusing on the history of religious dissent, radicalism, and minorities in Early Modern times. Since 2011, the group has organized panels at RSA annual conferences on practices and conceptual frameworks of religious conflict, heresy, and groups of radical dissent. The panels are characterized by a multiplicity of methodological and theoretical approaches.

EMoDIR is now planning for the upcoming RSA conference in Dublin (31 March-2 April 2022) a series of panels on this topic: "Under the Power of God: Trembling, Shaking, and Convulsions in Early Modern religious practices and imagination."

Many early modern religious groups were characterized by an intense spirituality that stressed the importance of the work of the divine Spirit in each and every true believer. One of the most visible and powerful signs of such spiritual possession was the experience of falling under the power of God, as expressed by the bodily manifestation of shaking, trembling, and convulsing.

The idea of a physical display of God’s possession became a marker of identity of the first generation of Quakers, of the persecuted Huguenots of the Cevennes, and of some Jansenist groups. However, the idea of the body as a prophetic theater was not alien to many people and groups in early modern times, as evidenced by the case of the Sabbatians. While these intense charismatic phenomena were perceived by those who experienced them as intense manifestations of the divine, their representation was used to vilify, denigrate, and ridicule these religious nonconformists. The theological and philosophical discussions about religious “Enthusiasm” were at the center of the confessional polemics of Early Modern times.

We invite contributions and papers which investigate and analyze:

- The theoretical and theological implications of putting at the center of the religious experience a suffering and contorting body
- The differences and relations between the traditional view of ecstasy and these radical practices
- The question of the debates and practices on how to discern divine from demonic possession and from natural physical or mental illnesses
- A comparative discussion of charismatic manifestations in a global perspective
- The rhetoric against the “enthusiastic” possessions
- The discussion of the “techniques” used to induce these seizure-like shakings
- The stress on these spiritual intense bodily manifestations as a sign of true conversion
- The relationship between mysticism, prophetism, and charismatic manifestation in a gender perspective

Proposals should be submitted by July 30, 2021 by email to Stefano Villani (villani@umd.edu) and emodir@emodir.net with full name, current affiliation, and email address; a paper title (15-word maximum), an abstract (150-word maximum), keywords, Ph.D. completion date (past or expected), and a brief CV (150 word maximum).