



European
University
Institute

DEPARTMENT
OF HISTORY
AND
CIVILIZATION

CALL FOR PAPERS

2nd EUI Conference in Visual and Material Culture Studies

Scandalous Feasts and Holy Meals: Food in Medieval and Early Modern Societies (12th-18th centuries)

25th May 2021

European University Institute, Florence

Organizing committee: Moïra Dato, Matthias Ebejer, Ana Struillou

From medieval Western Europe to the early modern Spanish Americas and Asia, scholarship dealing with foodways and foodstuffs has considerably evolved in the last decades. From the questions of local consumption practices, global flows of commodities to evolving tastes, new studies shed light on the intricate significance of food to early modern societies across the globe. Going beyond the essential character of drinks and foodstuffs for the survival of the human body, food consumption is now also being considered as an economic, social, religious and cultural marker. While the enjoyment of a meal can bring communities together, foodways and foodstuffs are also inherent to (sometimes violent) strategies of exclusion, resistance and protest. If texts provide precious information, material and visual sources have been increasingly used by historians to inform the study of food-related practices in past societies.

The researcher-led Visual and Material History Working Group of the European University Institute in Florence invites participants to a one-day conference on the visual and material culture of the history of food in medieval and early modern societies. We welcome proposals covering any aspect of food history, from the twelfth to the eighteenth century. Papers should discuss the methodology and the perspectives brought by the use of objects and visual representations as source material. We aim for this conference to reach beyond the bounds of historical scholarship and therefore warmly welcome papers from the fields of history of art and archaeology.

Proposals may include, but are not limited to:

- The regulation and supply of foodstuffs, food allocation and famines
- Food as a commercial commodity
- Food processing, recipes and gastronomy
- Eating practices and table manners

- Spaces of eating, private (kitchen, familial dining room) and public (restaurants, banquets, street-food)
- Illicit foodstuffs, scandalous foodways and sumptuary laws related to food practices
- Exchanges of food within diplomatic context (gifts, tribute), the table as a political space
- The relationship between food and religious practices/the sacred
- The connection between food, diet and medicine
- Food consumption as a type of resistance in colonial and non-colonial contexts
- Objects and decorative arts of eating (from tableware to table decoration and design)

This one-day event aims to provide a framework for discussion for all scholars interested in the relationship between food and social formations. By encouraging exchanges between different disciplines and time periods, we hope that this event will contribute to the introduction of new questions and perspectives in the field of food history.

To submit a paper, send an abstract (no more than 300 words) and a short biography to ana.struillou@eui.eu by 15th April 2021. Early-career researchers are particularly encouraged to submit.

Whether the event will take place online via ZOOM or on site (in a hybrid format) will be determined in the next months, depending on the evolution of the sanitary context. If the conference does take place on site (in Florence), partial covering of travelling and accommodation expenses is possible for the speakers willing to travel to Florence. Please indicate in your submission if you would be willing to come to Florence, should the situation allow it, or would prefer to attend via ZOOM.