

## **Food Traditions and Cultural Transfer. The Example of the Prince-Archiepiscopal City of Salzburg, 1500–1800**

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What did people eat and drink in the early modern period – and why? This fundamental question has not been answered in detail for any central European city, above all with regard to the different strata of the urban population. The project is a case study on the function and parameters of eating and drinking in the prince-archiepiscopal city of Salzburg. It is based on a multi-layered model which considers material and different symbolic qualities of food without arranging them in a hierarchy of lower (material) and higher (cultural) areas. Instead, all qualities are perceived as interconnected. By applying this approach to a manageable geographical area and excellent and widespread source material, an innovative and complex analysis is facilitated.

The following main questions are to be answered: 1) What were the main food traditions and which role did cultural exchange play in their development? 2) Did social groups (such as the estates) develop distinct patterns of eating and drinking? 3) What knowledge about food and dishes existed and which media and centres of communication were used to spread this knowledge?

The general research strategy is to divide the topic into several study areas in order to reconstruct the numerous cultural coinages as well as specific symbolisms of eating habits. The cornerstones at a glance: “archiepiscopal court”, “monasteries and convents”, “gastronomy”, “urban bourgeoisie”, and “institutional kitchen for the poor”. Each of these five parts promises valuable results on its own – ranging from the splendour of the courtly table, entertainment, communication, and violence in the urban taverns and inns to the meagre dishes for the poor. In combination, however, these institutions and social groups provide a unique insight into baroque city life in all its facets.

The aim of the study is to demonstrate, via a detailed analysis of contexts and interrelations, the significance of food and diet as central elements in the constitution of culture, society, and economy. Compared to the present day, diet in the early modern period was not so much determined by individual choices but rather by means of the connections between social groups and political regulations. Lastly, the rediscovery and local contextualization of historical cuisine provides important opportunities for engagement between academic research and the wider community with regard to gastronomy and tourism as well as current debates on culture and identity.