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How much is too much?

Negotiating boundaries of excess in early modern drinking cultures

a public lecture by

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Extract from Barthel Beham [?], 'Country Fair'

On the background of current concerns about alcohol abuse, this presentation will consider how over-consumption has been represented in the past, interrogating boundaries between 'acceptable' and 'excess' drinking. Drawing on sources such as sermons, moral tracts, fiscal records, travel reports and material culture, the argument seeks to strike a balance between the positive social functions of conviviality and negative repercussions like verbal/physical violence as well as, particularly important from an early modern perspective, dangers to the health of Christian souls. While many variables - occasion, site, gender, companions ... - affected period judgements, we will find one line that was definitely not to be crossed.

Beat Kümin, born and educated in Switzerland, is Professor of Early Modern European History at the University of Warwick, a member of the scientific council of the European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food (at Tours/France) and co-founder of the interdisciplinary Drinking Studies Network. Publications include the monograph *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (2007), the edited collection *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age* (2012) and two volumes in the source anthology *Public Drinking in the Early Modern World: Voices from the Tavern* (2012, with B. Ann Tlusty).



Photo: Vincent Leifer, Greifswald.

May 30, Thursday, 17:30
Nádor u. 9, Room 202