

B022 - Gastronomy and Sensory Culture in Middle Period China

📅 Friday, March 17, 2023

🕒 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

📍 Hynes Convention Center - Meeting Room 205 (Second Level)

The interdisciplinary field of food studies, located at the intersection of cultural studies, anthropology, history of medicine, religious studies, and material culture, has in recent years shed new light on a range of cultural phenomena, past and present. This panel draws on these insights to call attention to the profound contributions of Chinese gastronomic writings not only to practices of tasting, but also to practices of writing and thinking. In particular, our papers highlight two complementary aspects of food studies: 1) how symbolically laden literary tropes return to their literal and tangible dimensions and 2) how seemingly ordinary texts like cookbooks manifest larger cultural patterns which call their own categories into question. Thomas Mazanec studies how fish-tackle poems of the late Tang focus on the surface-level material of objects used for fishing to open a new path for reclusion, a time-honored tradition in Chinese literature and religion. Zihan Guo examines how *chang* (“intestines”), an important bodily image in literature, highlights synesthetic associations among writing, sensation, and thought. Robban Toleno investigates how a vegetarian text uses classical allusions to critique food practices of the urban elite and the problems of merit and stigma underlying their classist society. Wandu Wang explores how a gastronomic term coined in a thirteenth-century cookbook transformed over several centuries into a theoretical concept for material culture and art history. Drawing on a range of interdisciplinary methods, these papers highlight how gastronomic texts in different genres trace alternative paths of development through a pivotal moment in Chinese history.



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Organizer



Wandi Wang
University of California, Santa Barbara

Chair



Ronald Egan
Stanford University

Discussant



Ronald Egan
Stanford University

Presentations

Fishy Materials: On a Late Tang Poetic Series on Fish Tackle

Thomas Mazanec, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

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Singing Praise for Simple Fare: The Benxinzhai Shushipu's Mirthful Rebuke of Ostentatious Eating

Robban Toleno, *Independent Scholars of Asia*

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Empty Intestines: Hunger and Metaphor in Middle Period Chinese Poetry

Zihan Guo, *Princeton University*

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Good Taste in Gastronomy, Aesthetics, and Material Culture: On the Evolution of "Pure Offerings" (*qinggong*) from the Southern Song to the Qing

Wandi Wang, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

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