

The Renaissance Banquet (Montreal 24-26 Mar 11)

Diane Bodart

The Renaissance banquet : images and codes
(Renaissance Society of America Montreal Conference 24-26 march 2011)

Organizers :

Diane Bodart (Université de Poitiers)

Valérie Boudier (Paris, EHESS)

Chair :

Allen Grieco (Firenze, Villa I Tatti)

An influential occasion of sociability, the banquet consolidated the cohesion of the family group, allowed integration of new family members and aided political and amicable reconciliations. A fulcrum of the community, the banquet sealed matrimonial alliances, political coalitions and other important connections. Gathered at the same table, diners had to become not only eating companions, but also fellow guests. If eating the same food together was the foundation of community, conviviality was even more essential in the act of dining. During the Renaissance, codified behavioural norms were established, particularly for the table. The reaffirmation of court etiquette, the widespread diffusion of treatises on conduct and the fashion for establishing a compendium of table manners participated in this phenomenon. To what extent were images also involved?

This panel will be dedicated to the study of the banquet and its visual representations in the Renaissance. It will explore a variety of themes - political, religious or mythological, symbolic or comic - from the moment that the arrangement of the banquet made reference to a greater or lesser extent to contemporary table arrangements. Whatever the records of banquets considered may be, we will strive to read the table and its surrounding activities, taking account of iconographic material and conduct literature : the kind of food eaten or simply presented, the way the table was set, the rules regarding servants, the presence of musicians or musical instruments, the gestures of those eating or the sexual play between diners. In bringing together a vast material and immaterial corpus of sources for reading the table, dialogue between disciplines will provide a point of exchange for different, but complementary, approaches.

Encompassing knowledge of the different constituent elements of the banquet,

the aim of this panel will be to decipher the visual forms of conviviality, the vocabulary of the banquet and the artistic stakes in this theme of representation.

Please email an abstract (max. 150 words) and a short CV by May 21, 2010 to: Diane Bodart (diane.bodart@univ-poitiers.fr) and Valérie Boudier (larevie@libertysurf.fr).

Reference:

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