

The Mediterranean Senses. Sensual Knowledge and Perceptive Culture in the Early Modern Mediterranean

Whether one gives preference to “nurture” or “nature”, at least how we interpret our sensual perception is shaped culturally. Yet, while the senses are a prominent topic in current historiography, studies of the Mediterranean as a cultural world have not yet been affected by the ‘sensual turn’. What do Early Modern Mediterranean dwellers think about their senses? What is the role of sensual perception in intellectual and material cultures and how do actors connect this to ‘knowing’ the Mediterranean world around them? Such a focus on the senses could provide a new perspective on our conceptions of Mediterranean cultural interconnectedness, shared material culture, and peculiarities be they nutritional, religious, or environmental in nature. This project touches on the History of Knowledge, Intellectual History and the History of Material Culture under a Sensory History approach. Its aim is to explore the potential of a Mediterranean History of the Senses. Can it reveal a new dimension of the Mediterranean as a cultural region, that goes beyond the lines drawn by languages, religions, and regional cultures?