



# WATER, DIET AND HEALTH IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

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We tend to assume that in the premodern past people did not drink water as an ordinary beverage, considering its consumption risky if not dangerous for their health. And yet in the early modern period (1500-1800) people “knew” which water was best and which should be avoided, thanks to longstanding experience, even if the rationale behind this knowledge was expressed in a natural philosophy very different from our own. In this talk, divided in two parts, we shall compare knowledge around water consumption with medical practice, and how both evolved over the course of the early modern period.

David Gentilcore is full professor of early modern history at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where he is also PI for the ERC project: “Water-Cultures: The Water Cultures of Italy, 1500-1900.” His books include: *Pomodoro! A History of the Tomato in Italy* (Columbia UP, 2010); *Italy and the Potato: a History, 1550-2000* (Continuum, 2012); *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe* (Bloomsbury, 2016); con Egidio Priani, *Pellagra and pellagrous insanity in the long nineteenth century* (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2023); e “*Cose rare e ammirande del nuovo mondo*”. *Le piante commestibili americane nell'editoria veneziana tra Cinque e Settecento* (Marsilio, 2024).