

A Tale of Two Breads: The Eucharistic and the Everyday Loaf in Early Medieval Europe

Sunday, February 18, 4 p.m. Eastern Time



In his *Summation of All Theology* (published in the 1260s), Thomas Aquinas stated categorically that God was not present in sacred breads made from any grains other than wheat. Aquinas further advised that the wheaten host should be made as small, flat, white discs without any leavening, completely unlike the bread people ate at home. Yet a thousand years earlier Christians had celebrated Jesus's Last Supper using whatever breads they had at hand. This presentation investigates how medieval Christians came to think that the divine presence would occur in specific types of flour, and doughs shaped in specific ways. It presents the early medieval period, prior to the year 1000 CE, as a time when Europeans experimented with ingredients, recipes, and techniques for manufacturing the sacred food consumed weekly in Christian liturgies.

[A link to the YouTube node will be available here](#) beginning an hour prior to the event.

If you would like to receive a reminder the day before, [please register here](#).

About the speaker



Paolo Squatriti teaches premodern history at the University of Michigan in the departments of History, Romance Languages and Literatures, and in the Program in the Environment. He studies past European environmental relations. His publications have addressed subjects such as early medieval water and woodland management, the modification of landscapes for political purposes, premodern societal resilience in the face of natural disasters, the spread of exotic plants in the Mediterranean region, and the classification of plants in Carolingian culture.