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‘Pots and Pans History’: The Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England FREE

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Abstract

This paper attempts to review early modern food processing and preparation, and the material culture of such operations, as constitutive of the practical, spatial and relational household in early modern England. The spatial and material construction of the kitchen between around 1650 and 1750 operated as a locus for quotidian but nevertheless informative interaction between potential and actual consumers, and objects of consumption. Kitchen goods encompassed fluid notions of necessity and novelty, offering households an interface with innovative technologies on a domestic scale. The combination of accumulated and introduced goods, which kitchen assemblages comprised, connected utensils to multiple conceptions of value—functional, moral, familial and sexual. Their representation and location have consequences for the re-evaluation of economy contemporarily and historiographically understood, and for readings of consumer practices as a conduit for securing not change, but domestic continuities.

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