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DR. MELISSA ELMES PUBLISHES EDITED COLLECTION OF ESSAYS WITH ROUTLEDGE PUBLISHING

April 14, 2021

By Tori Lohmann

On April 7, 2021, Dr. Melissa Elmes published a collection of essays titled *Food and Feast in Premodern Outlaw Tales*, alongside co-editor Kristen Bovaird-Abbo. The collection was published by Routledge, a global publisher of academic works founded in 1836. It is a longstanding publication that focuses on works in Humanities and Social Sciences and has published pieces by historical icons, like Albert Einstein and Theodor Adorno.

Elmes's edited essay collection features essays by eleven different scholars, including herself, and focuses on the "importance of the meal and food...in texts featuring outlaws." It falls under the "umbrella of food studies" that has become increasingly popular over recent years and brings together "food studies, outlaw studies, and medieval studies" in one text. From start to finish, the project took about two years to accomplish. This is Elmes's third published work, and she has more exciting projects being published in the next couple of years.

Along with editing the collection, Elmes also contributed her own essay to the collection. This essay, "Acting Out(law): Feasts, Outlawry, and Identity Constructions in Two Shakespearean Comedies," is "based on a conference paper" she wrote about "feasts in Shakespeare." It focuses on two specific Shakespeare plays, *Two Gentlemen in Verona* and *As You Like It*, and how "Shakespeare is using these feasts to construct insider/outsider status in his characters." Instead of looking at feasts as "moments of rupture and violence," she looks at them as a "rehabilitation tool" for the outlaw characters in these texts.

While reflecting on this project, Elmes states it is "a little nostalgic" since "it's pulling from work she did from her dissertation." Though the project was difficult at times, due to the pandemic and "closures of archives and libraries," and was pushed off for "several months" because of lack of access to materials, Elmes and her team were able to work around these struggles. She and her colleagues set up groups online where others could share the sources with those who did not have access to them. There were

a lot of “logistical hurdles to jump over,” but this gave Elmes “the opportunity to learn new ways of handling those kinds of issues.”

Elmes notes that it’s always “validating to see your work shepherded into print [and] to have a publisher that believes in your work and wants to put it out in the world for people to buy.” “It never gets old,” she says, “and it’s both humbling and exciting.”

This collection of essays is available on Routledge’s website.