Between the 16th and the 19th century, a new awareness and new uses of the nighttime slowly but unmistakably spread through different parts of the world, whereby new regimes of temporality redefined the spheres of work and leisure, of activity and repose. Social life, as well as labor and entertainment, spilled over into the night hours, inviting the use of psychotropic substances such as coffee and tea and a sense of the manipulability of the architecture of night and day.

The order of the nocturnal and the diurnal, easily taken for granted as one of the most natural of phenomena, is only recently attracting attention in terms of its historicity, perhaps because of our awareness of living 24/7, of traveling faster than the means of adaptation of our biological clock, and of various strains on our circadian rhythms. This conference brings together some of this pioneering research (on circadian rhythms, history of sleep, representations of the night in art and literature, and social uses of the darker hours) in order to consider and discuss the transformations of the way nighttime was experienced and imagined in different parts of the early modern world.

This conference is open to the public with no charge.
FRIDAY, JUNE 15
Nighttime in Poetical and Political Imagination
Chair: Nicola Courtright (Amherst College)

10.15 Elisabeth Bronfen (University of Zurich & New York University)
Shakespeare’s Nights

10.45 Coffee

11.00 James Attlee (Writer and Artist, Oxford)
Night Vision: Moonlight as a Portal in Art, Literature and Life

11.30 Jocelyne Dakhlia (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris)
The Night of the Crow: Political and Poetic Variations on Black and Night in the History of Morocco

12.00 Discussion

13.00 Buffet lunch

THURSDAY, JUNE 14
Introductory Remarks

10.00 Welcome coffee

10.30 Alina Payne (Villa I Tatti / Harvard University)

10.45 Cemal Kafadar (Harvard University)

History of Sleep: Japan and England
Chair: Maria Loh (Villa I Tatti / CUNY Hunter College)

11.00 Brigitte Steger (University of Cambridge)
“Nobody Slept a Wink, but Kept Watch Over the Emperor:” Sleep and Sleeplessness at the Ancient Japanese Court

11.30 Sasha Handley (University of Manchester)
“An Half Adieu Unto the World:” Preparing for Sleep in Early Modern England

12.00 Discussion

13.00 Buffet lunch

Circadian Rhythms, Sleep, and Historicity
Chair: Alexander Nagel (Villa I Tatti / New York University)

14.30 A. Roger Ekirch (Virginia Tech)
How the Past Informs Our Understanding of Sleep

15.00 Satchidananda Panda (Salk Institute for Biological Studies)
Health Consequence of Circadian Rhythm Disruption

15.30 Discussion

16.00 Tea

Toward a Social History of the Night
Chair: Carlo Ginzburg (UCLA & Scuola Normale Superiore)

14.30 Angelika Koch (Virginia Tech)
“Night in the City:” Nighttime Entertainments in Early Modern Japan

15.00 Cemal Kafadar (Harvard University)
Night, Darkness and Sleep Between the Invention of Coffee and 24/7

15.30 Discussion

16.00 Sanjay Subrahmanyam (UCLA & Collège de France)
Concluding Reflections

16.30 Tea