



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF
MEDICINE AND THE BODY
IN THE RENAISSANCE

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
FONDAZIONE COMEL

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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
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STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

Julius-Maximilians-
**UNIVERSITÄT
WÜRZBURG**



PSMEMM
Palgrave Studies in Medieval & Early Modern Medicine

**CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS**



THE WAR OF TORMENTS

8
NOVEMBER
2022
5.00 pm CET

IMAGINING AND EXPERIENCING THE GREAT POX IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

JOHN HENDERSON • BirkBeck University of London

The epidemic of the Great Pox had a profound impact on many aspects of early modern European society. In contrast to plague, which led to rapid rises in mortality, this new chronic disease led to long-drawn-out suffering, poverty, destitution and death, infecting all levels of society, from popes and cardinals to princes, courtesans and the poor. This lecture is part of an ongoing project on how the Great Pox was imagined,

received and experienced in Renaissance Italy. Building on the approaches and findings of recent studies of early modern England, Germany and Spain, this paper will compare the experience and representation of female and male Pox patients through the examination of both written and visual evidence. These will include contemporary written accounts, such as satirical and moralistic poems and plays, and visual evidence,

ranging from broadsheets to medical illustrations. It will be argued, that only by analysing these sources through the prism of contemporary medical understanding of the nature of the Pox and its symptoms can we begin to understand more clearly how this disease was perceived and represented in text and image in renaissance Italy.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at csnbr.fondazionecomel.org