

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

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



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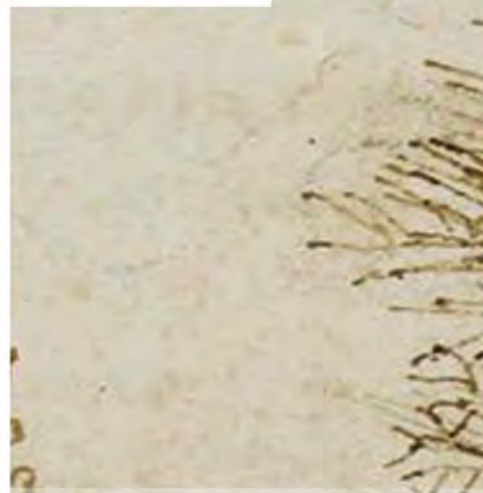
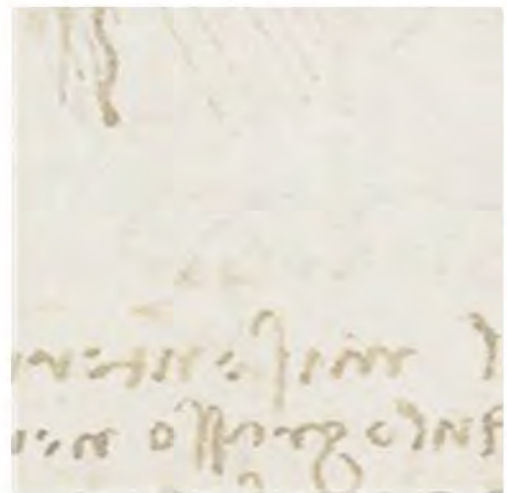
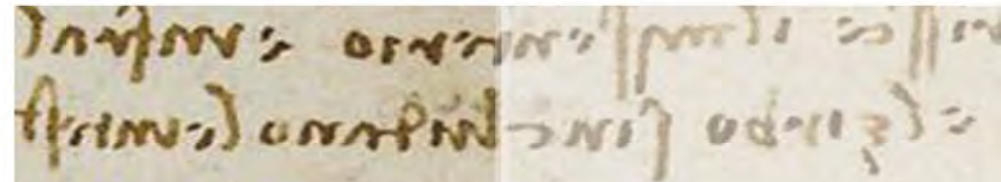
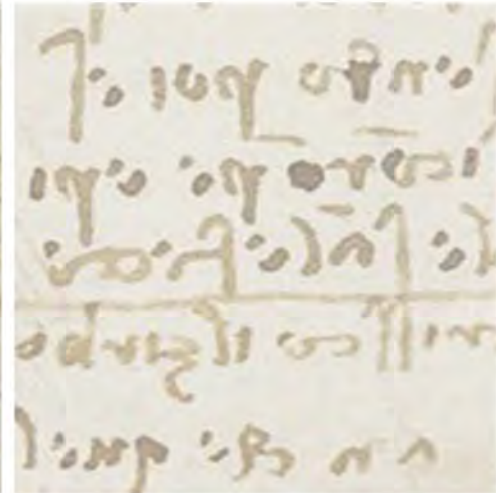


STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA



PSMEMM
Palatino Studies in Medieval & Early Modern Medicine

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



MELANCHOLY AND FEVER IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

8
FEBRUARY
2023
5.00 pm CET

THE ROLE OF THE MESENTERY IN THE MEDICAL TEXTS OF MONTAIGNE AND DESCARTES

JIL MULLER • University of Paderborn

In the medical and philosophical texts from the early modern period, one can notice a huge interest in melancholy, the 'fashionable' evil of that time, confining great minds to sadness and depression. We find this discussion also in the writings of Montaigne and Descartes. At the end of September 1580 Montaigne stayed in Basel for a few days where he met Félix Platter, a young physician, on the 29th of September. The two men discussed not

only religious matters, but also medicine and anatomy. They most probably exchanged views on melancholy and fever, and it is noticeable that after this visit to the Basel doctor, Montaigne took up and changed his thoughts on melancholy, in particular by emphasizing the role played by the mesentery. The most interesting point is the distinction both made of melancholy and hypochondriacal melancholy: they are distinguished by the

diversity of symptoms and treatments, which have to be considered. A little bit more than 50 years later, Descartes also takes up the description of the role of the mesentery, in his work *Anatomica* and *Circa generationem animalium*. In this lecture, I shall explore the role that Montaigne and Descartes associate with the mesentery, the influence of Montaigne and Platter on Descartes and whether Descartes' thought on the matter changed over time.

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