

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

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
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YALE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

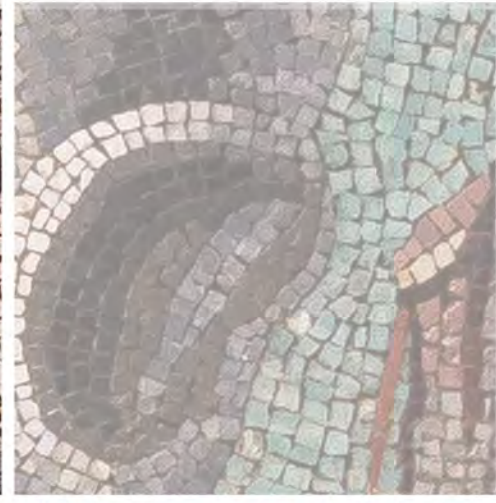
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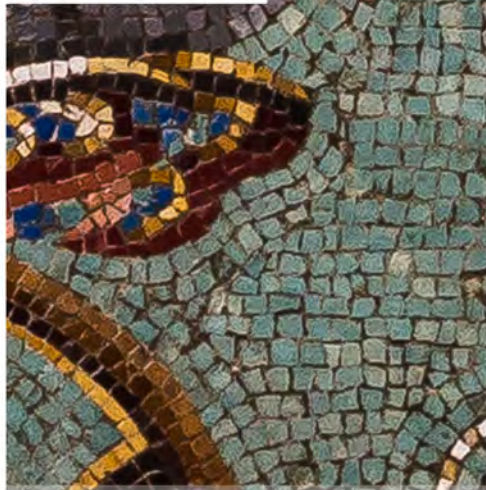
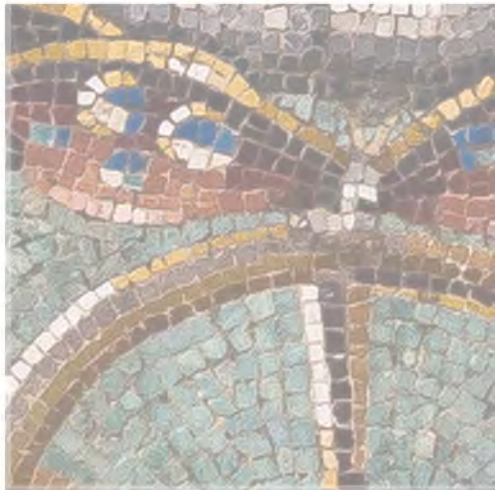


STUDIO FIRMANO
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

PSMEMM
Palgrave Studies in Medieval & Early Modern Medicine



CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



POISONING AND SUSPICIOUS DEATHS IN THE CLASSICAL WORLD

21
FEBRUARY
2023
5.00 pm CET

VENOMS IN ROMAN LEGAL AND RHETORICAL TREATISES

NEPHELE PAPAKONSTANTINO • Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg

The way in which the Romans dealt with cases of poisoning in legal and judicial practice has recently gained increasing attention in the context of Latin imperial declamations. These school exercises convey educated medico-legal understandings and wider cultural perceptions of the activity of using *venena*. Emphasis has been laid, so far, on cultural issues and stereotypes raised by the problem, through a legal, historical-literary, and narratological

reading of rhetorical and legal sources. Building on the latest research findings, this paper proposes to further explore the dialectic between, and parallel development of, forensic rhetoric and Roman law in the 1st century CE with regard to the criminalisation of poisoning, by shifting the focus to the actual conceptual workings of the law within rhetorical education and court practice. How was poisoning defined and structured?

Which elements of the crime had to be proven, and through which type of reasoning and argumentation? How was poisoning understood and negotiated to promote specific conceptions of 'health' and 'legality'? What does this whole process reveal about Roman technical medico-legal knowledge and expertise? What were its ideological implications? These and other questions will be analysed and clarified in my talk.