



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

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WÜRZBURG**



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



**PSMEMM**  
Palgrave Studies in Medieval & Early Modern Medicine

CSMBR  
ONLINE  
EVENTS

# SICKNESS AND HEALING IN BYZANTIUM

5  
DECEMBER  
2023  
5.00 pm CET

FROM THE IMPERIAL COURT TO THE CITY HOSPITALS

IRENE CALÀ • Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich

Greek medicine has come to us through the Byzantine civilization, as evidenced by the numerous medical works produced throughout the history of the Eastern Roman Empire. This lecture aims at providing an overview of the medical practices offered to the citizens of Byzantium, the role of hospitals and their connection with religious and political institutions, as well as the care provided by physicians at the imperial court. Indeed, body integrity was not

only about medicine, but has deep social and political implications, the sacredness of the emperor's body being a central theme in Byzantine medicine. I shall therefore address the question as to how medical theory and practice were transmitted and used in Byzantium. In so doing, I will use different sources, from medical manuscripts used to encode traditions into current practice to the medical works produced in Byzantium, espe-

cially the surgical work of Paul of Egina (625-690 AD) and its reception. As well as medical texts, I will discuss a number of episodes drawing from historical works and epistolary letters, such as the historical work of John Skylitzes (1040-1101 AD), including an analysis of the illuminated manuscript from Madrid. In the final part of my lecture, I will highlight the role of the doctor in manipulating the body of the sick person, with an emphasis on anatomical knowledge and surgical operations, including mutilations and autopsy cases.