



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

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
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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

MIRACULOUS HEALINGS

10
OCTOBER
2023
5.00pm CEST

THAUMATURGICAL PRACTICES AND SAINTS' DEVOTION IN EARLY MODERN SICILY

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Thaumaturgical practices and medical remedies have frequently interacted over the centuries. To deal with illnesses that medicine could not always cure, people often resorted to miraculous cures or rituals performed with saints' relics. Early modern Sicily provides a number of useful case studies for reflecting on the relationship between medicine and thaumaturgy. One of the most relevant is the so-called *Miracula et beneficia* ('Miracles

and Benefits'), i.e. the records of the trial of the miracles of Saint Angelus that took place in Licata, Agrigento in 1625-1627. This hagiographic source is relevant not only for the study of folkloric practices and devotional rites, but also for the history of medicine more generally, since it often contains references to diseases and their treatment. In this talk, I will focus specifically on the thaumaturgical remedies used by devotees

to cure their illnesses with the help of saints' relics or the supposedly miraculous water that gushed from the spot where St Angelus was martyred in 1220. I will discuss the presence and role of physicians, especially in the observation of diseases and the prescription of medical and sometimes thaumaturgical remedies, with particular reference to the plague that struck Sicily in 1624 and reached Licata in 1625. Finally, I will present some of the diseases described in the text, including hernia, a malformation for which Saint Angelus was considered a specialist.

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