



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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**UNIVERSITÄT
WÜRZBURG**



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



ACTION RESISTANCE & FORCE

5
MARCH
2024
5.00 pm CET

DEBATING THE LAW OF REACTION IN NATURAL PHILOSOPHY AND MEDICINE 1300-1600

SYLVAIN ROUDAUT • Stockholm University

The phenomenon of reaction poses a fundamental challenge within Aristotelian natural philosophy. Despite its frequent occurrence in everyday observations, explaining it within the traditional Aristotelian framework proves to be notably arduous. While it seems impossible to deny that a hot iron bar cools upon immersion in water and subsequently warms the water, certain instances of reaction, though empirically evident, present puzzling aspects. For in-

tance, how can two bodies possessing opposing qualities of exactly the same force act on each other? This talk will be about the evolution of this problem during a specific era, the late Middle Ages and the early modern period (approximately 1300–1600). It will present new ideas that emerged in this period from discussions from natural philosophers and also physicians, for whom the problem had important implications,

ranging from explaining the internal functioning of the body to measuring and predicting the effect of medicines. I will first explain why the case of reaction was particularly difficult to explain in the context of the Aristotelian conception of nature that was still heavily influential for physicists and physicians of this period. Then, the main solutions put forward by philosophers and physicians of this period will be presented together with the specific problems they raised concerning the notions of force and resistance, pivotal in shaping the modern scientific understanding of nature.

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