

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

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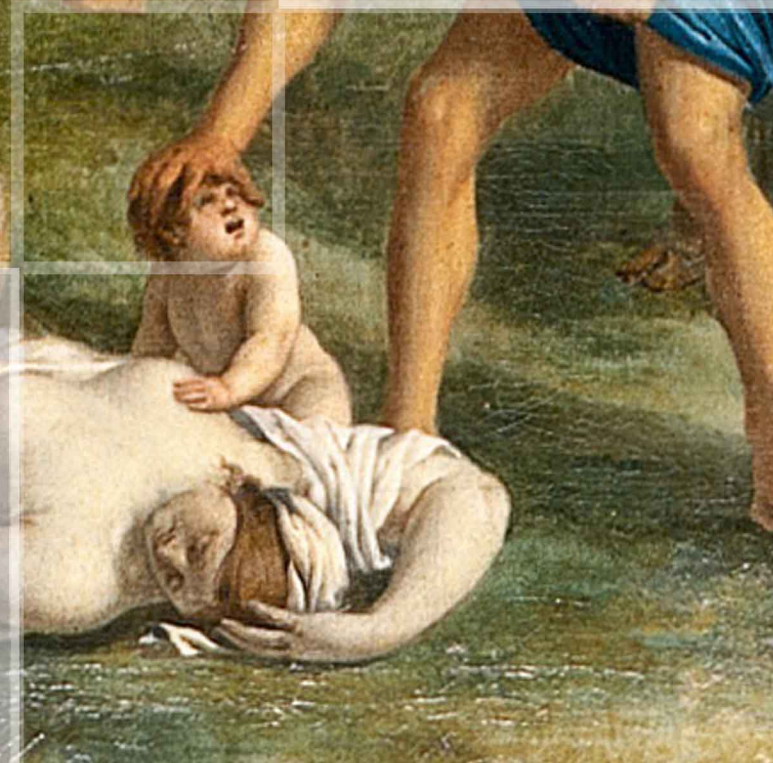
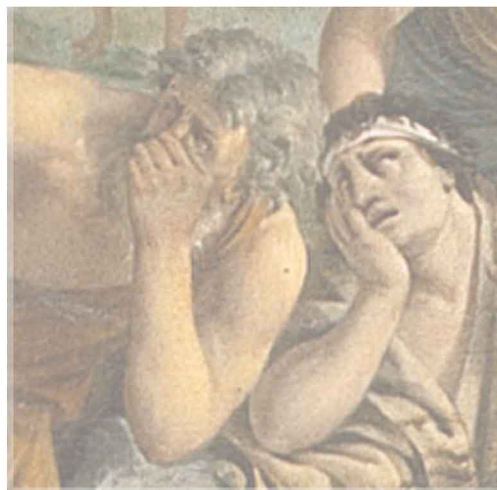


UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



MEDICINE AND THE NEAPOLITAN PLAGUE OF 1656

14
MAY
2024
5.00 pm CEST

NEW DOCUMENTS AND PERSPECTIVES

SILVANA D'ALESSIO • University of Salerno

Until recently, medicine and the Neapolitan plague of 1656 remained unexplored areas of study. In the last seven or eight years, the situation has changed drastically, and we are now looking at works produced during this period with a greater awareness of their importance. This is the case of Geronimo Gatta's *Di una gravissima peste* (Naples, 1659), a work which, although outstanding in many respects, was not the only one to address the causes and effects

of the pandemic. In this talk I will discuss other contemporary and little-known sources, such as those of Carlo Morexano (1659) and Giovanni Battista Verri da Vigiano (1662), which shed light on various aspects of the Neapolitan plague. I will also analyse a series of manuscripts, including letters from Neapolitan authorities and doctors' reports, which reveal the main concerns about the plague. People yearned for a

saviour, be it a doctor or a remedy, while ideas about the nature and possible remedies changed over time. Ultimately, the plague even impacted on the way doctors viewed their own profession. Soon after Naples suffered the 'trauma' of 1656, a group called *Gli investiganti* became increasingly sceptical about medicine's ability to achieve certainty. Their vitriolic criticism marks an approach to science that stands in stark contrast to the narrative of seventeenth-century physicians following in the footsteps of Descartes, and is therefore worthy of closer scrutiny.

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