



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

DRINKING PLAIN WATER IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD

2
JULY
2024
5.00 pm CEST

DISEASE PREVENTION AND THERAPEUTICS

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The early modern period witnessed a complete shift in medical attitudes towards drinking water. In this two-part paper, I propose to compare knowledge around the consumption of common water with medical practice and the changes both underwent. We introduce this with a brief discussion of the sorts of analyses of the "qualities of waters" that were carried out at the time, a history that has yet to be written, especially for plain or ordinary waters (as op-

posed to mineral or spa waters). We shall then move on to a discussion of medical knowledge, both in theory (prevention) and in practice (therapeutics). For the first, focusing on the changing use of drinking water in the prevention of disease, we shall consider printed health regimens (guides to staying healthy and living long), then a very successful literary genre. For the second, the changing place of drinking water in med-

ical case histories and consultations, with real patients as participants, to understand how doctors put their knowledge into practice.