



INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS

AMBROISE PARÉ AND HIS CONTEXT

10
SEPTEMBER
2024
5.00 pm CET

MAPPING THE TERRITORY OF A RENAISSANCE SURGEON

ELENA BERGER • Russian Academy of Sciences and Russian Medical Museum

Ambroise Paré is well known in the history of medicine for pioneering new areas of surgery, including the treatment of gunshot wounds, post-wound infections and obstetrics. However, his writings go far beyond the treatment of wounds, covering a range of medical issues from poisoning to the causes of abnormal births. Paré's achievement in expanding the boundaries of the profession brought with it a new attitude towards surgery and surgeons. He insisted

that surgery could now be regarded as equal to other branches of medicine, despite the fact that it was still divided in guilds and schools, relied occasionally on the help of barbers, and was not taught as university subject. This claim coincided with the decline of Latin as the European lingua franca for scientific exchange and the gradual emergence of vernacular languages as a different and less controlled medium of

communication. Paré famously published his works in French, which helped to raise the status of surgery as an academic discipline in France. On the one hand, this vernacularisation facilitated the dissemination of knowledge – as it was now accessible to practitioners without a university education; on the other hand, however, it limited the dissemination of knowledge to a more local audience. Drawing from my recent book, I will use Paré as an example that sheds light on sixteenth-century medicine and technological innovation in the Renaissance.