



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

ISTITUTIO SANTORIANA
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Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS

POPULAR DISEASES AND THAUMATURGIC SPECIALISATIONS

16
JANUARY
2025
5.00 pm CET

READING MARIAN LEGENDS AS A MEDICAL SOURCE (EARLY 18TH CENTURY)

MARCO PAPASIDERO • University of Palermo

The aim of this lecture is to explore the representation of illness in a collection of legends about the founding of Italian Marian sanctuaries, written at the beginning of the 18th century, also based on previous sources. The lecture has two primary objectives. The first is to investigate the initial healings directly associated with the miraculous events, such as the recovery of a mute person after encountering the Virgin Mary or the sudden restoration of mobility

to a lame individual. This involves analyzing the purpose of these early healings, their role in shaping a specialized practice of thaumaturgy, the potential involvement of physicians in verifying such cures, and the authors' reflections on the interplay between miracles and medicine. The second objective is to study the catalogues of miracles documented alongside the foundation legends, to identify whether the sanctuaries

emerge as 'specialized healing places,' with their therapeutic focus rooted in the founding legend of each site. Additionally, the lecture will touch on magical and folkloric practices observed at these sanctuaries and their connections to concepts of illness and healing, enriching the discussion of the interplay between religion, medicine, and popular belief.