



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

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA  
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



University  
of Exeter



Julius-Maximilians-

UNIVERSITÄT  
WÜRZBURG



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR  
ONLINE  
EVENTS

# MEDICAL VIEWS ON SEXUAL PLEASURE IN THE RENAISSANCE

30  
SEPTEMBER  
2025  
5.00 pm CET

## INTERPRETING HIPPOCRATES' «ON GENERATION»

BERNARDO MOTA • University of Lisbon

In the sixteenth-century, Girolamo Mercuriale (1530-1606) proposed a philological correction to Hippocrates's *On Generation* 4, which fuelled an ancient medical debate on the duration and intensity of sexual pleasure in men and women. Mercuriale's correction made its way into the editions of the Hippocratic text, but some early modern physicians argued that it was inconsistent with it and insufficiently justified. This paper focuses on two Portuguese

physicians, Rodrigo de Castro (1523-1600) and Estêvão Rodrigues de Castro (1559-1638), who offer distinct perspectives when engaging with Mercuriale's correction and Hippocrates' text. Rodrigo de Castro supported the Italian physician's solution and expanded the argument to include modality ('ways') as a third axis of analysis, besides duration and intensity. Conversely, while critiquing Mercuriale's correction, Estêvão

Estêvão Rodrigues de Castro's inquiry emphasized physiological factors instead of temperamental differences. Ultimately, this talk will showcase how scientific discourse and philological methodology intersected in the early modern period.