



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

INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
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UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS

THE TRANSFORMATION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE HISTORIES

13
JANUARY
2026

5.00 pm CET

THREE DECADES OF PALEOGENETICS AND HISTORIANS' RESPONSES

MONICA H. GREEN • Independent Scholar

In 1994, it was announced for the first time that molecular fragments of a premodern pathogen had been retrieved from premodern human remains. In the subsequent 30 years, the field of pathogen paleogenetics has developed exponentially, with dozens of nearly complete genomes retrieved for both viral as well as bacterial diseases. The most important aspect of this new field, however, is not in simply identifying the types of diseases. It is in identifying their

particular evolutionary strains, for in that knowledge lies evidence for the epidemiology and circulation patterns of infectious diseases in the past, an aspect of history previously obscure even for those diseases that leave clear osteological markers. For plague, leprosy, and syphilis, we now have increasingly complex histories that push narratives beyond Europe into Afro-Eurasia, the Americas, and Oceania. What do those

stories that go so far beyond our documentary records tell us? And how might we read our written sources with new eyes and new questions?

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