



ISTITUTIO SANTORIANA
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



University
of Exeter

Julius-Maximilians-
UNIVERSITÄT
WÜRZBURG

U LISBOA | UNIVERSIDADE
DE LISBOA



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



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

CSMBR
ONLINE
EVENTS



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

RENAISSANCE DEBATES ON OCCULT QUALITIES

FROM JEAN FERNEL TO DANIEL SENNERT

HIRO HIRAI • University of Tokyo

10
FEBRUARY
2026
6.00 PM
CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

Renaissance natural philosophers and physicians engaged in intense debates on "occult qualities" at the threshold of the Scientific Revolution. The professor of Medicine at the University of Wittenberg, Daniel Sennert (1572-1637), played a significant role in these debates through his assiduous research. His efforts were crystallized in two works of his mature period: an inquiry into occult qualities as the second book of his *Physical Memoirs*

and the massive volume *On Occult Diseases* (1635). Indeed, the Renaissance debates on occult qualities were closely related to those of "occult diseases" (*morbi occulti*), as both issues were intertwined and fervently advanced by Jean Fernel (1497-1558) of Paris. Sennert's lifelong quest for occult qualities and occult diseases was a critical response to Fernel's ideas. In the present lecture, I will first examine the discussion

of Fernel as Sennert's forerunner (section 1). Then I will look briefly at the debates after Fernel (section 2). These studies will lead to the survey of Sennert's activity and productions (section 3), followed by the inspection of a striking case of 1610 from his university disputations (section 4). These analyses will contribute to a better understanding of Sennert's intellectual context. His research on occult diseases and occult qualities stretched from the early stages of his career to the final products of his mature period. His lifelong quest had the aim of responding to the Renaissance debates launched by Fernel.

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