



INSTITUTIO SANTORIANA
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



University
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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

YIDDISH MEDICINE IN TIMES OF EPIDEMICS

FAITH, SECRETS, AND CURES IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

DANIELLA ZAIDMAN-MAUER • University of Amsterdam

11
JUNE
2026

5.00 PM

CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

When epidemics struck early modern Europe, people reached for every remedy available — practical and spiritual, natural and supernatural. This lecture explores how Jewish communities in central and western Europe responded to epidemic disease, through vivid examples drawn from books and pamphlets written in Yiddish, the everyday language of European Jews. Long before modern medicine, healing was never purely physical. Across

religions, illness was understood as both a bodily and a moral event — a disruption of the order between humanity and God. Jewish healers and rabbis navigated this world with remarkable creativity, combining herbal recipes, dietary advice, quarantine rules, and prayer into a single, practical system of care. We will encounter amulets prepared by Jewish mystics — rooted in ancient Greek medicine and shared across Jewish, Christian, and

and Islamic traditions. A Yiddish plague tractate that offered rules for surviving an outbreak, weaving hygiene, community solidarity, and spiritual discipline into one coherent guide. And a Jewish physician's war against smallpox, in a frightened early modern European community struggling to see that protecting life was not a challenge to faith — it was its fulfilment. Together, these stories reveal a world in which prayer and medicine, faith and science, were not opposites — but partners in the urgent, deeply human work of survival.

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