



INSTITUTIO 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

# BEYOND CONTAGION

RETHINKING THE HISTORY OF LEPROSY IN THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN

ANNA GILI • University of Padua

22  
SEPTEMBER  
2026

5.00 PM

CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

Given the variety of its pathological manifestations, leprosy was difficult for physicians in the past to recognise. They attempted to provide different pathological descriptions, distinct aetiologies, and varied clinical portraits to grasp its nature. Even the proposed treatments, although often influenced by the Galenic discovery of the riac, show considerable variation. This talk explores some of the texts composed in the medieval Arabic, Latin, and Greek

worlds that sought to capture this multifaceted pathology, with the aim of providing a commentary that goes beyond the narrow focus on contagion typical of scholarship on the subject. Drawing on my recent book *Leprosy in the Mediterranean Medical Literature* (De Gruyter, 2025), I examine these texts through the combined lenses of philology and the history of medicine to reconstruct a history of leprosy that is, at the same time, a history

a history of authors, texts, translations, and cultural exchanges. At the centre of the talk will be al-Majūsī's *Kitāb al-Malakī*, a work that both draws upon and goes beyond antique and late antique doctrines on the nature and treatment of the disease. This text will be placed in dialogue with earlier Arabic works such as Sarābiyūn's *Compendium*, al-Tabarī's *al-Mu'ālaġāt al-Buġrāṭiyya*, and al-Zahrāwī's *Kitāb al-Tasrif*. I will then turn to the Latin and Greek translations of the *Kitāb al-Malakī* to examine how the Arabic author's biologically grounded, non-moralising approach to the disease was conveyed by its translators.

The event is free to attend but registration is required. Info at [csmbr.fondazionecomel.org](https://csmbr.fondazionecomel.org)