







CSMBR ONLINE EVENTS

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

MANAGING EPIDEMICS IN EARLY MODERN VENICE

RECORD—KEEPING AND INFORMATION

JOHANN PETITJEAN • University of Poitiers

26 JANUARY 2027

5.00 PM

CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME

This talk examines plague governance in Venice as an information regime. It asks how officials gathered and recorded news of contagion, how that information guided their decisions, and what records they kept. It traces the links between the laws that authorised intervention, the procedures by which officials put measures into effect, and the documents that recorded their actions. In doing so, it asks to what extent the Venetian state took shape through the day-to-day work of governing contagion, and how that work made its authority visible to those subject to it. Drawing on the records of the *Magistrato della Sanità*, I argue that certificates, account books, legal texts, and correspondence formed a documentary system that accompanied, enabled, and shaped sanitary action as a prophylactic "paper cordon" around the city and its territories. The presentation will interrogate the place of record-keeping about contagions, both internal and international, within the Venetian governmental edifice, in line with the insights of the "archival turn". As a contribution to medical history, the talk reframes the management of plague as a problem of information, documentation, and archiving. It invites medical historians to reconsider how epidemics were governed through written forms, and how the state itself was constituted through the very paperwork that sought to contain contagion.

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