



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
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POBIMA - Preaching on Body and Wellness in the Middle Ages

This research is an interdisciplinary historical investigation on preaching wellbeing and health in the Middle Ages (XII-XV cent.). The goal is to investigate how medieval preachers taught people to take care or not of their body, how to love or despise it. It will focus on eating disorders, physical activities and stomach illnesses. POBIMA will delineate how medieval preaching operated as a mass communication tool to create a share common attitude towards medicine and corporeality. Thanks to a huge manuscript research, POBIMA highlights connexions between popular beliefs and scientific assessments. It points at placing medieval popular knowledge in contact with contemporary questions to highlight breaks and continuities in oneself's perception and on mass media impact on body and medicine. I argue that medieval preachers acted as vehicles of medicine beyond treatises and medical arts, wandering and speaking all over Europe for centuries. Not only they morally justified or blamed their audience self-care, but they were able to create a net of knowledge and attitudes which deeply affected the development of medical arts. The project will offer a new approach in studying medieval preaching, emphasising its interdisciplinary and diachronical dimension and will challenge the current state-of-the art, highlighting how body maintenance was a common concern from the end of 12th century, both for men and women. Finally the research will help to understand the historical evolution of a European sensitivity and a commitment towards Medicine and physical activities, crossing contemporary questions with medieval ones. There is a running thread between these historical issues and questions concerning the importance on health care and wellbeing in the world today and the increasingly concern about them. The research project is a multilingual study, based on medieval manuscripts kept in several European libraries that will employ an interdisciplinary and a transnational approach.