

PREFACE AND
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*T*his book is a study of connections, parallels, and mutual interaction between two influential disciplines, medicine and history, in fifteenth- to seventeenth-century Europe. The elevation of history in status and significance, the expansion of the scope and methods of history, and the related (but distinct) growth of antiquarianism are among the most striking—and recently among the best studied—features of the humanist culture of that period. Over the same centuries, medical knowledge, too, was transformed in ways that linked learned tradition with empirical investigations and with an emphasis (not new, but greatly increased) on description, narrative, material evidence, and particulars; and humanism—in many senses of that slippery term—strongly influenced not only the content and presentation of medical knowledge but the entire intellectual formation of academically educated medical practitioners.

Since much evidence suggests that medieval and Renaissance medical learning was in general highly responsive to contemporary intellectual currents, I thought it would be worth inquiring into the extent both to which changing notions of history affected the literature of medicine and to which medical men contributed to historical writing. In short, I sought answers to these questions: What aspects of Renaissance medicine resonated with the contemporary understanding of history or historical method? What kind of history did medical doctors write? What kinds of doctors wrote history? Such answers as I found are in the following pages. As I pursued this topic, the

eclectic enthusiasm with which Renaissance physicians embarked on historical writing led me into many new areas and taught me a lot. I shall miss their company.

I owe thanks to many friends and colleagues for their help at different stages of this work. I am particularly grateful to the scholarly editors of the University of Michigan Press series *Cultures of Knowledge in the Early Modern World*—Ann Blair, Anthony Grafton, and Jacob Soll—and to two anonymous referees for the University of Michigan Press for very useful comments on the entire manuscript. I also wish to thank Frédéric Tinguely for reading and commenting on chapter 8 and Ian Maclean and Gianna Pomata for helpful discussions and advice. Remaining mistakes are, of course, my own. It has been a pleasure to work with Chris Hebert as editor. A grant from the Mellon Foundation financed travels to libraries in Europe and research expenses at home. At different times, Manu Radhakrishnan and Christopher Pettit provided research assistance. Thanks also to Alice Falk for help with manuscript preparation. I am grateful to the staffs of all the libraries where I have worked, but especially to Miriam Mandelbaum and Arlene Shaner of the Rare Book Room of the New York Academy of Medicine.

Invitations to deliver the Josephine Waters Bennett Lecture at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in 1999 and the Garrison Lecture at the annual meeting of the American Association for the History of Medicine in 2003 provided opportunities to begin to develop the themes of this book. I am grateful to the Renaissance Society of America for permission to reuse some of the material from my article based on the first of those lectures, “Anatomizing the Past: Physicians and History in Renaissance Culture,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000): 1–30. Though not incorporated into this book, my article based on the second of those lectures—“Medicine and the Renaissance World of Learning,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 78 (2004): 1–36—also sets out a preliminary sketch of some of the questions and issues I have tried to explore more fully here. Somewhat different versions of sections of chapters 2 and 4 appeared in, respectively, “History, Antiquarianism, and Medicine: The Case of Girolamo Mercuriale,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 (2003): 231–51, and “Oratory and Rhetoric in Renaissance Medicine,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65 (2004): 191–211—both copyright *Journal of the History of Ideas, Inc.*, and both reprinted by permission of the University of Pennsylvania Press. Another short section of chapter 2 will appear in Thomas Rütten, ed., *Geschichte der Medizingeschichtsschreibung* (Remscheid: Gardez! [in press]). An earlier version of a section of chapter 5 appeared as part of my article “Cardano and the History of Medicine,” in

Girolamo Cardano: Le opere, le fonti, la vita, ed. Marialuisa Baldi and Guido Canziani (Milan: FrancoAngeli, 1999); I am grateful to FrancoAngeli for permission to reuse this material. An earlier version of chapter 6 appeared as “*Historiae*, Natural History, Roman Antiquity, and Some Roman Physicians,” in *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gianna Pomata and Nancy G. Siraisi (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 325–54; I thank MIT Press for permission to reprint this material. An earlier version of a section of chapter 8 appeared in “In Search of the Origins of Medicine: Egyptian Medicine and Paduan Physicians,” in *Inventing Genealogies*, ed. Valeria Finucci and Kevin Brownlee (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 235–61; I am grateful to Duke University Press for permission to reprint.

Finally, as always, my greatest thanks are owed to my husband, to whom this book is dedicated.