From the eleventh century to the Black Death in 1348 Europe was economically vigorous and expanding, especially in Mediterranean societies. In this world of growing wealth new educational institutions were founded, the universities; and it was in these that a new form of medicine came to be taught and which widely influenced medical care throughout Europe. The knowledge of the university medical practitioner, both physician and surgeon, was built on translations of Greek and Arabic texts, together with personal experience of medical practice.

The essays in this collection focus on the practical aspects of medieval medicine, and among other issues they explore how far this new learned medicine percolated through to the popular level; how the learned medical men understood and coped with plague; the theory and practice of medical astrology, and of bleeding (phlebotomy) for the cure and prevention of illness. Several essays deal with the development and interrelations of the nascent medical profession, and of Christian, Muslim and Jewish practitioners one to another. Special emphasis is given to the practice of surgery and to innovation in surgical technique, to the development of surgical treatises which made learned surgery more widely available, and to the role of royal surgeons. The problems of recovering knowledge of a large proportion of medical care – that given by women – are also explored.

Practical medicine from Salerno

to the Black Death
Practical medicine from Salerno to the Black Death

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8. A chaplain from Colston with a sore on his breast. British Library, Sloane MS 56, fol. 73.


10. John of Arderne’s operation for fistula in ano. Stages of the operation are shown above the instruments to be used. British Library, Additional MS 29301, fol. 25.

11. Two presentations of fistulae, as seen by the surgeon. British Library, Sloane MS 56, fol. 53.

MAP
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Acknowledgements

The present volume arises from the conference on ‘Practitioners and medical practice in the Latin Mediterranean, 1100–1350’ (Barcelona, April 1989), organized by the Department of the History of Science of the CSIC in Barcelona and the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine of the University of Cambridge, and would not have been possible without the enthusiastic collaboration of all those attending, both the contributors of papers and those who took part in the ensuing discussions. The conference was made possible thanks to the generous help of the Dirección General de Investigación Científica y Técnica of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science. We are also grateful for the financial assistance of CSIC (Madrid), CIRIT of the Generalitat de Catalonia, the Subdirección General de Cooperación Internacional of the Spanish Ministry of Education and the Wellcome Trust (London). The stimulating atmosphere of discussion was further encouraged by the warm welcome offered by the President and staff of the Institut d’Estudis Catalans, on the premises of which in the former Hospital de Sant Pau i de la Santa Creu the conference took place. Our thanks also go to the management and staff of the CSIC’s residence for research-workers in Barcelona for their hospitality; to Maribel Sevillano and Elena Orriols, secretaries of the Department of the History of Science in Barcelona; to Fernando Salmón, Montserrat Cabré and Lluís Cifuentes, at the time Ph.D. students at the CSIC.

The final text of this book owes much to the suggestions of two anonymous referees of Cambridge University Press.
Note on names

In the vexed matter of the appropriate form of medieval names, we have mainly followed the usages in Nancy Siraisi, *Taddeo Alderotti and his Pupils: Two Generations of Italian Medical Learning* (Princeton, 1981), and Michael R. McVaugh and Nancy Siraisi (eds.), *Renaissance Medical Learning: Evolution of a Tradition* (*Osiris*, 2nd series, 6 (1990)). Alternative versions of names are given in the index.

It has been impossible to achieve consistency throughout the volume in the spelling and accenting of Peninsula place names, and we have generally opted for forms most familiar to the English-language reader.