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0521395143 - Legal Medicine in History - Edited by Michael Clark and Catherine Crawford
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Cambridge History of Medicine

EDITORS: CHARLES WEBSTER AND CHARLES ROSENBERG

Legal medicine in history

This collection of essays presents fresh interpretations of the growth of medico-legal ideas, institutions and practices in Britain, Europe and America over the past four hundred years. Based on a wealth of new research, it brings the historical study of legal medicine firmly into the realm of social history.

Case studies of infanticide, abortion, coroners' inquests and criminal insanity show that legal medicine has often been the focus of social change and political controversy. The contributors also emphasize the formative influence of legal systems on medico-legal knowledge and practice. *Legal medicine in history* enlarges our understanding of the public role of medicine in modern western societies, while opening up new perspectives on social, cultural and political history.

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Wellcome Trust, London

AND

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Preface

This book was conceived at a conference on the history of legal medicine held at the University of Lancaster in 1987, organized by Michael Clark and Roger Smith and funded by the Nuffield Foundation and the Wellcome Trust. The aim of the meeting was to bring together scholars working on various aspects of the history of medico-legal relations in order to develop comparative perspectives and stimulate further research. Four of the papers in this book were first presented at the Lancaster conference; the rest are the fruit of research conducted since then.

The Wellcome Trust has provided both of us with research fellowships in recent years, and without that support this book would probably not exist. We are also indebted to Charles Webster, Carol Jones and John Keown, who made valuable suggestions at an early stage. Our warm thanks go also to Anne Goldgar, who advised and occasionally arbitrated on editorial questions, and to Marie Williams, who helped prepare the text. Most of all, though, we would like to thank the contributors. Their commitment to the project and their constant good humour were a great help to us.