CHAPTER FOUR

THE DIFFUSION OF LEARNED MEDICINE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY THROUGH THE PRINTED BOOK

My aim in this chapter is to undertake a survey of the diffusion of learned medicine in the form of an ideal type which will be adequate as a general guide to the period 1525 to 1625 in Europe, but will concentrate on the period from 1565 to 1625.1 This will only, of course, provide a framework within which to discuss each individual event of publication; it is not intended to be any more than a heuristic device by which to recognize the most important features of a field of knowledge which is in itself difficult to delimit. Its core may be taken to be editions of classical medical texts, monographs, scholarly works, and pedagogy all in Latin, for although some learned medicine is written in the vernacular, it had to be translated into Latin to have an international impact.2 Works which are neither widely diffused nor published do not belong to it (this would be the category of local beliefs and practices, transmitted orally or by manuscript); nor does the learning which is unpublished but widely diffused through correspondence and the practice of peregrinatio medica which none the less leaves its mark on the field of printed books in the form

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1 For an attempt to describe the equivalent field of law books, see Ian Maclean, Interpretation and meaning in the Renaissance: the case of law, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 30–49.

of transcriptions of lecture notes (see Appendix 1, nos. 1, 2, 10, 22).\textsuperscript{3} But there is clearly a relation between the publication of books, the diffusion of learning, and the various networks of the Republic of Letters of the time, which I shall not have time to investigate here;\textsuperscript{4} and even published works which are printed for use in local universities, such as ‘libri scholastici’ (textbooks) and dissertations, or in narrow markets such as Spain, England, and certain small German printing centres, may play a part in it.

The questions I shall ask about this published field of knowledge are ones which are suggested by the economics of the book trade of the time. What drove the market for learned medical books? How was the market for medical books related to other parts of the learned book market?

\textsuperscript{3} This is a very significant factor in medical learning, especially in Germany. The list of German students at Padua, Bologna, and Ferrara between 1550 and 1630 is impressive; and Basle can also claim after 1580 to have an international student body who take away with them just as positive an impression of the teaching they received. A cursory glance at the matriculation and disputation lists of Paris, Montpellier, Heidelberg, Wittenberg, Vienna, Helmstedt, Oxford and Cambridge show a much more markedly, although not wholly, local character. Whatever the reasons for the popularity of some centres over others, it seems to me indubitable that their imprint on the European medical world is very great.

\textsuperscript{4} The correspondence of doctors, especially in the same period, also reveals the range and liveliness of academic exchange: see Ian Maclean, ‘The medical republic of letters before the Thirty Years War’, \textit{Intellectual History Review}, 11 (2008), 15–30. It seems that letters could be said to fall into two broad classes; those written with an expectation of later publication; and those which are addressed to one recipient only. The first category is by 1550 an established genre; fifteenth-century Italian humanists had used the letter form with classical models in mind informally to discuss philosophical and philological questions, and their northern counterparts were happy to continue this tradition, and to adapt it for the specific purposes of medicine. Giovanni Manardo’s early example in this was followed by Johannes Lange, Joachimus Camerarius, Johannes Schenck, Lorenz Scholze, Johannes Crato von Krafft heim and others. Even quite obscure doctors had the letters they received from their more notable contemporaries published: witness the volume entitled \textit{Cista medica} which appeared in Nuremberg from the presses of Simon Halbmayor in 1626, and is made up of letters addressed to Sigismund Schnitzer of Ulm, who seems himself to have had otherwise an unremarkable medical career. The dedications and preliminary verses found in books offer further evidence of the range and nature of contacts between doctors. It is my impression that as a professional body they are much more cosmopolitan than their faculty rivals the lawyers, and more up to date with developments in medicine and natural philosophy throughout Europe. It is possible to detect networks inside the world of learning, not only in respect of places such as Padua, but also of people such as Andreas Libavius and Johannes Crato von Krafft heim; some of these networks are informed by ideologies such as the irenic and encyclopaedic version of Calvinism, on which see \textit{International Calvinism}, ed. Menna Prestwich, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985; R.J.W. Evans, \textit{The Wechel presses: humanism and Calvinism in central Europe 1572–1627}, \textit{Past and Present}, Supplement 2, Oxford, 1975. For a bibliography of medical letters, see Appendix II below, pp. 85–6.