Here in the United States our system of medical education presumes a definite interrelationship between medicine and the liberal arts. The first major step towards it was taken when the Johns Hopkins Medical School was founded, in 1889: at a time when many medical schools required only a high-school education “or its equivalent,” at Hopkins admission was premised, in part, on a four-year college education and a bachelor’s degree. Other schools followed suit, and the famous Flexner Report, in 1910, ensured that this would henceforth be the norm. We now take for granted that medical education is a graduate program, a kind of *école de deuxième cycle*, that builds on the knowledge gained in an undergraduate career, and the undergraduate courses taken by a pre-med student are a matter of intense concern as he tries to anticipate what medical admissions committees will want to see on his record.

The same kind of structural relationship seems to have become increasingly common in the later fourteenth century before it was formally established (at Paris, at least) by Pope Martin V in 1426, but it would be premature to imagine that the same kind of intellectual dependence lay behind it, that medieval medical masters were requiring the equivalent of training in organic chemistry from the disciples they accepted. What I want to do here is to consider the relation between arts and medicine, not in the later years when it was moving towards the state in which it was fixed by Martin V, but in the first century or so of university medical education, roughly between 1220 and 1330; I will be looking specifically at two schools where arts and medicine existed in separate faculties, Paris and Montpellier. It is a period for which we have comparatively little direct institutional evidence, and I freely (and I hope disarming) concede at the outset that I will

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1 For the context of the pope’s action, see Danielle Jacquart, *La médecine médiévale dans le cadre parisen* (Paris, 1998), pp. 132–33. The papal document is in *CUP*, 4:454 (not “545,” as given by a typographical error in Jacquart, p. 132), no. 2274.
inevitably be offering large quantities of inference and speculation; but perhaps the very freedom of these speculations will help suggest other pieces of evidence that will challenge or confirm them.

Let me begin by presenting a few scraps at least of hard evidence, four excerpts from university documents of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries:

(1) From the first revision of the statutes of the medical faculty at Montpellier, January 1240: “no master shall present any student [for the license] who has not studied medicine at Montpellier or some other notable place for at least three and a half years, unless he was a master of arts at Paris or some other notable place, in which case he can be presented after two and a half years of study.”

(2) From the first statutes of the medical faculty at Paris, dating from the early 1270s: “the time of study necessary [for the license] is five and a half years if the applicant is a master or a licentiate in arts, or six years if he is not a master or licentiate.”

(3) From the second revision of the statutes of the Montpellier medical faculty, September 1309: “[licentiates] will be required to have studied medicine in this faculty for five years if they have been satisfactory masters of arts at some famous place, otherwise for six years, computing a[n academic] year as eight months.” The same statement is made in the third great revision of the faculty’s statutes in 1340, this time with Paris specified as fulfilling the prerequisite (“nisi Magister fuerit in Artibus Parisius vel in alio Studio famoso”).

(4) From a letter from Pope John XXII to the bishop of Paris, 1331 (paraphrased): “from time immemorial it has been the practice in the faculty of medicine at Paris that someone must study medicine there for thirty-four months if he is licentiatus in artibus (or for thirty-six if he is not) before he can be admitted to teach; and he must have had fifty-six months

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3 *CUP*, 1:517, no. 453, of 1270–74: “Tempus auditionis quod debet audivisse per quinque annos cum dimidio si rexerit in artibus vel licentiatus fuerit, vel per sex si non rexerit vel licentiatus fuerit.”


5 Ibid., 1:357.