



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
MEDICINE AND THE BODY  
IN THE RENAISSANCE

ISTITUTIO SANTORIANA  
FONDAZIONE COMEL



YALE UNIVERSITY  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences



University  
of Exeter

Julius-Maximilians-  
UNIVERSITÄT  
WÜRZBURG



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PARMA



STUDIO FIRMANO  
PER LA STORIA DELL'ARTE MEDICA E DELLA SCIENZA

CSMBR  
ONLINE  
EVENTS

# CESALPINO AND ARISTOTELIAN SCIENCE

11  
JUNE  
2024  
5.00 pm CET

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF MEDICAL BOTANY IN THE 16TH CENTURY

QUENTIN HIERNAUX • Université Libre de Bruxelles  
CORENTIN TRESNIE • Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

In 1583 the Italian botanist and physician Andrea Cesalpino (1524–1603) published *De Plantis Libri XVI*, considered to be the first treatise where botany is treated independently from medicine. In so doing, he broke with a long tradition inherited in Western science from Antiquity and perpetuated during the Middle Ages through the early Renaissance. At the same time, Cesalpino grounded his new approach in an original but well-informed interpreta-

tion of Aristotelian epistemology. This allowed the Italian philosopher to propose his own naturalistic teleology, as well as innovative uses of the old method of analogy. *De Plantis* laid the foundations of scientific systematics through a new focus on plant morphology and natural similarities and became a milestone in the history of Western botany. It is a precious testimony to the evolution of botanical and physiological

knowledge in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and illustrates the role of Aristotelian philosophy in 16th-century science.