Between 1633 and 1642, the French physician and philanthropist Théophraste Renaudot sponsored a series of public conferences in Paris. These conferences offered an open forum for wide-ranging discussions of a variety of topics, including science, medicine, gender, politics, and ethics. No matter the topic, participants consistently used scientific reasoning as a new standard of evidence. The conferences thus recast the rhetorical traditions of the Renaissance and prefigured the social sciences of the Enlightenment. They provided a candid snapshot of intellectual life at the dawn of the scientific revolution in France.

In Making Science Social, Kathleen Wellman uses the published conference proceedings to develop a broadly conceived, revisionist interpretation of the intellectual history of seventeenth-century France and of the roots of modern culture and science.

(continued on back flap)

KATHLEEN WELLMAN is Professor of History at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. She is the author of La Mettrie: Medicine, Philosophy, and Enlightenment.


UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA PRESS
Norman • oupress.com
Contents

Series Editor's Foreword ......................... xi
Preface ........................................... xiii
Acknowledgments ................................. xvii

PART I BACKGROUND
CHAPTER ONE The Intellectual Setting:  
"A Spacious Arena for Your Spirits" ............. 3
CHAPTER TWO The Context of the Conferences  
and the Career of Their Sponsor ................. 22

PART II SCIENCE
Introduction ...................................... 59
CHAPTER THREE Talismans, Incubi, Divination,  
and the Book of M*  
Nature and the Occult .......................... 68
CHAPTER FOUR "Whether the Heavens be Liquid or Solid"  
Science at the Bureau ......................... 106
CHAPTER FIVE Of Physiognomy, Smallpox, and the Bezoard  
Health, Disease, and Medical Therapy .......... 156

PART III FROM SCIENCE TO HUMAN SCIENCE
Introduction ...................................... 199
CHAPTER SIX Souls, Passions, Learning, and Language  
Human Nature, Human Knowledge .............. 208
CHAPTER SEVEN Covetousness, Friendship, and Interest  
Ethics and Practical Wisdom .................. 248
CHAPTER EIGHT Of Censorship, Sedition, and Luxury  
Politics and Economics ........................ 275
CHAPTER NINE "The Extravagance of Women"  
Science, Sex, and Gender ..................... 325
Conclusion  From a Culture of Science  
toward the Enlightenment .................. 367
Appendix  List of Conferences Cited ........... 383
Notes ............................................. 389
Bibliography ..................................... 429
Index ............................................ 451

Illustrations

Théophraste Renaudot ........................... ii
Armand-Jean du Plessis (Cardinal Richelieu) .. 2
Mandragore mas (The Mandrake) ............... 58
The Professions: Bleeding ..................... 198