Théophraste Renaudot Encyclopedia Article

Théophraste Renaudot

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Théophraste Renaudot

1586?-1653

French physician who organized an early state-supported medical care program for the poor. A longtime protégé of Cardinal de Richelieu, Renaudot served as court physician to King Louis XIII, who commissioned him to organize a system of public assistance. The result, in 1630, was the bureau d'adresse, an organization whose many functions included a free dispensary and a service to direct poor patients to doctors offering free medical care. Renaudot ran into opposition from the Paris medical establishment, led by Guy Patin (1601-1672), and in 1642, after the deaths of Richelieu and Louis, they denied him the right to practice medicine in the capital. In addition to his other activities, Renaudot is remembered as the father of French journalism.