Gems of Italian Medical History
Johannes de Ketham (fl. 1460)

Fasciculus medicinae, Venice, 1491.

The *Fasciculus* contains a collection of medical texts current among students and practitioners of the late Middle Ages. It is known as the first illustrated medical book in print featuring some of the highest quality Renaissance woodcuts in the 15th & 16th centuries.
The School of Salerno was the first known medical school in Europe flourishing from the 8th-12th centuries. Its textbook, the *Regimen* contains rules of hygiene and medical treatment, as well as of “good life.” The translation in verse which is reproduced here is in fact by the Elizabethan poet Sir John Harington, published in 1607 in London at the John Holme and John press.
Leoniceno was professor of medicine in Padua, Bologna and Ferrara. This work of his is one of the earliest Renaissance texts on *morbus gallicus*, i.e. syphilis. The book was published by Aldus Manutius, the renowned humanist printer, in 1497. The binding is a 17th century Parisian masterpiece.

**Niccolo Leoniceno**

*(1428-1524)*

The title of the book:

*De Epidemia, quam Itali morbum gallicum, Galliuer Neapolitanum uocant, Nicolai Leoniceni Vincentini liber.*
Petrus Lacepiera (d.1306)
*Libro de locchio morale et spirituale.*
Venice, 1496.

Title page illustration; 15th century woodcut.

*Libro de locchio morale* primarily discusses ethical questions but also contains the scientific description of the eye and some eye diseases. It is the second earliest book on human vision. Note that this early academic audience includes three women!
"Della simmetria" is Dürer’s landmark work on the proportions of the human body. This is an Italian translation (Venice, 1591) which came out very soon after the original German to serve the eager audience of “the land of artists and art.” Note the “Renaissance pose” of the figure similar to the famous Leonardo drawing. Dürer had other interests same as Leonardo’s: besides being an outstanding artist, he too wrote treatises on mathematics, chemistry, engineering, and anatomy.

**Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)**
Galileo Galilei (1564-1642)

*Dialogvs de systemate mvndi.* Lyons, 1641.

*De systemate mundi* is a famous work in the history of astronomy. In the form of a scientific dialogue it contrasts two contradictory worldviews (systems of the universe): one by Ptolemy and the other by Copernicus.
Seventeenth century leather book binding

Raised bands are major structural elements that are keeping the book together.

Bycolor head-band. Besides being a structural element, it became part of the decoration of the book from the seventeenth century.

Gold-tooled decoration on spine
Manzini, Carlo Antonio (d. 1678)
*L’occhiale all occhio dioptrica practica.*
Bologna, 1660.

One of the earliest detailed accounts about methods of grinding and polishing lenses. The illustration is a late (17th century) woodcut. The artist was able to express tones with parallel lines thus competing with the more modern copperplate technology. The book has a contemporary “paperback” binding: the arrows denote the leather strips providing flexibility for the opening of the book similarly to raised bands.
A work for artists that contains anatomical and physiological observations as well as Leonardo’s theory of motion. Like in Dürer’s book on proportions, here too the human body is in the focus, both artistically and anatomically. This is a late (1721) English translation bound in a classic 18th century blind-tooled leather binding.
Eighteenth century blind-tooled leather binding

Blind-tooled decoration.
No gold foil was placed between the ornamental tool and the leather.

Raised bands
An important publication in the history of eye glasses. According to Redi, the first reference to the invention of the eyeglasses is in a 1299 manuscript. The title page vignette (above and next slide) and the portrait of the author (right and following slide) are extremely fine copperplate illustrations.
Note the details!
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Antonio Molinetti, (d. 1675)
*Dissertationes anatomico-pathologicae*. Venice, 1675.

A survey on the anatomy and pathology of the human body. Of great importance are Molinetti’s investigations on the physiology of the senses and the brain.

Title page vignette. Woodcut or copperplate?
Francesco Algarotti (1717-1764)

Il Newtonianismo per le dame ...

Napoli, 1737.

The first successful popularization of Newtonian physics, especially for women. The author, a young Venetian, who travelled extensively in Europe received immediate acceptance from the best intellectual circles where he met Newton.
Natalis Giuseppe Pallucci (1719-1797)  
*Methode d’abattr la cataracte.* Paris, 1752.

Italian born Pallucci, who specialized in cataract surgery, published his books mostly in France. This volume of his features copperplate illustrations and a gold-tooled leather binding typical in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
Giovanni Battista Morgagni, (1682-1771)

Morgagni, long time chair of the anatomy department in Padova, is regarded the founder of pathological anatomy. Besides medicine he was well versed in archiology and the Classics and wrote his main work, *De sedibus*, in Latin.
This original licence certifies Giacomo Bonagrazia to compound and dispense quercetano pills in Treviso, Italy. The pills were originally produced by Giovanni Scrodero. The small volume is a manuscript written on vellum and bound in vellum with armorial insignia on both covers.
This book is about the famous Molineux-question, whether a person who was born blind and suddenly regains sight would be able to recognize certain shapes (cube & ball) without touching them. The volume has marbled paper binding with vellum spine.
Antonio Scarpa (1752-1832)  
*Saggio di osservazioni* ...Pavia, 1801.

*Saggio di osservazioni* is regarded the greatest work on ophthalmic pathology in the 19th century. Scarpa’s volumes were all superbly illustrated with plates engraved after his own drawings. His portrait shows the finest features of classic copperplates. The book is bound in a 19th century-style quarter leather and paper binding.