Preface

This project has bittersweet associations for me. It began as an outgrowth of research on Stoic influences in Islamic philosophy, a project I have pursued off and on for about fifteen years. In 2001, the American Research Institute in Turkey and the National Endowment for the Humanities were kind enough to fund my research on such issues in Istanbul for a summer, a time I remember with the greatest pleasure. When I looked at the manuscripts of the Alexandrian epitomes, it seemed clear to me that they ought to be published and that at least the five I plan to publish had philosophical interest. I began editing the epitome of On the Elements According to the Opinion of Hippocrates in my evenings in the Istanbul hostel of the American Research Institute and continued to work on the project in my idle moments during a Rockefeller Fellowship in the Department of the History of Science at the University of Oklahoma the following fall. That winter, my wife, Linda Strickland Walbridge, was diagnosed with a recurrence of breast cancer. I decided to focus on this project since text editing lent itself to hospitals and doctors' waiting rooms. I also thought it would be a good transitional project that could be finished quickly—a piece of naïveté that I doubtless share with many others who have innocently undertaken to edit a text. Linda, rahimahā Allāh, died the following winter, by which time I had collated most of the manuscripts for two of the three texts presented here. (I had also found out that Galen's three schools of physicians are still very much with us.) Over the next five years, the project progressed slowly as I shouldered heavy departmental responsibilities and gradually put my
life back together. At any rate, the first three texts are now finished, and I hope to finish two more—the epitomes of *On the Temperament* and *On the Natural Faculties*—before too long.

I am grateful to acknowledge the following organizations for funding and other support while I was working on this project: the American Research Institute in Turkey, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Turkish Fulbright Commission, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Department of the History of Science at the University of Oklahoma, Indiana University, the İslâm Araştırmaları Merkezi (ISAM) in Istanbul, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

The publication of this book is funded in part by the Sorenson Legacy Foundation, the creation of the biotechnology pioneer James LeVoy Sorenson and his wife, education philanthropist Beverley Taylor Sorenson. I hope that this book, a testimony to the ancient human enterprise of educating those whose profession it is to fight disease and preserve health, will be worthy of their efforts in medicine and education.

The following libraries supplied photographs of manuscripts used in this edition: the British Library in London, the Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi in Istanbul, and the Manisa İl Halk Kütüphanesi in the lovely town of Manisa, near Izmir. I also used the library facilities of the Süleymaniye, the British Library, the University of Oklahoma, Princeton University, ISAM, and Indiana University, and I am grateful to the generosity and kindness of the librarians at those institutions. Only someone who has worked in the Turkish manuscript libraries—and particularly the Süleymaniye, the greatest Islamic manuscript library in the world—can appreciate the achievement of Turkish librarians over the centuries. The manuscripts that I work with are not beautiful, being doctors’ and professors’ books, usually in bad handwriting with notes in the margins and on the flyleaves and entirely without elegant illustrations; but learned princes and ministers recognized their value, brought them back as trophies to Constantinople, and saw to it that they would be cared for across the centuries. One of the manuscripts used in this project was copied by a Christian doctor in Acre when it was ruled by the Crusaders. It bears the elegant inscription of the royal librarian who checked it into the library of the Aya Sofya mosque three hundred years ago. It was carefully repaired, probably at that time, and then repaired
again sometime in the twentieth century. And it was waiting in the same
collection, ready to hand as the royal donor and the long-dead librarian
intended, when I called for it at the beginning of the twenty-first cen-
tury. One stands humbled by the persistence of learning and profession-
alism represented by the survival and cherishing of these books.

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