



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Department of Philosophy
and Cultural Heritage



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Otto Tachenius, Hippocrates chemicus / Wikimedia Commons

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Crisis and Change in Early Modernity:
Knowledge, Practice, Governance

Mechanism and chemistry in early modern Italy

Antonio Clericuzio
Università Roma 3

My paper investigates the establishment of iatrochemistry in the Italian Peninsula, and its relationship to mechanism. In the first part, I provide an overview of the reception of Paracelsian medicine in Italy. In the second, I take into account the impact of Helmontianism by examining the life and work of Otto Tachenius, a German iatrochemist who settled in Venice and became famous for his chemical remedies. Finally, I explore the interaction of iatrochemistry with mechanism by focusing on the Neapolitan Accademia degli Investiganti and on Giovanni Alfonso Borelli. They ruled out Descartes' reductionism and explained the main functions of living organism by integrating mechanism with chemical experiments and theories.



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