

## Heresy, Medicine and Paracelsianism in Sixteenth-Century Italy: the Case of Girolamo Donzellini (1513–1587)

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### Summary

Many Italian physicians embraced Protestant ideas during the sixteenth Century: this suggests a connection between medical science and religious nonconformity. But why were physicians so exposed to the influence of Protestantism? Can we suppose that their heretical views affected the way in which they conceived medicine? And can we posit a particular link between certain kinds of medical thinking and specific religious doctrines? In order to analyse this relationship, I will focus on a specific character: Girolamo Donzellini. As a physician of great renown, put on trial five times by the Venetian Inquisition and eventually sentenced to death, Donzellini is a good case study. Moreover, his exposure to the works of Paracelsus allows one to put forward some considerations on Italian Paracelsianism, showing that medical attitudes often described as incompatible by historians could actually coexist in the same person, as a result of the complexity of the cultural and religious context.

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