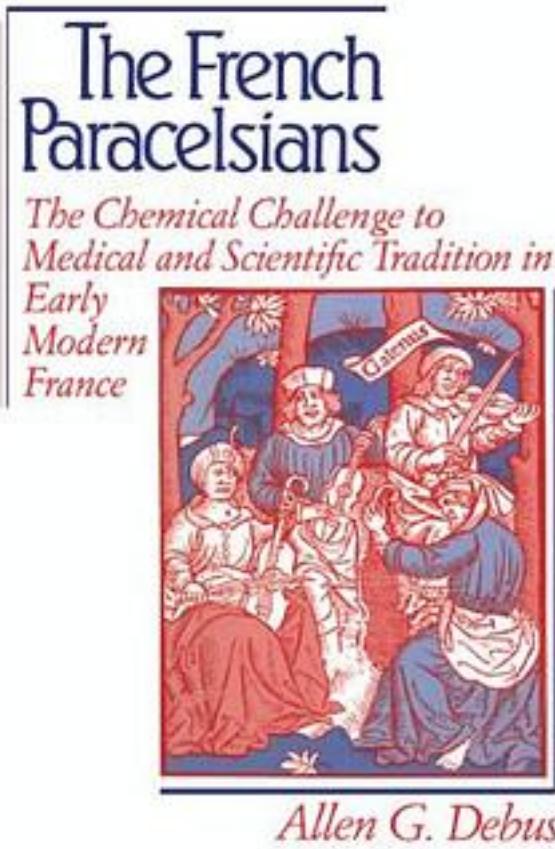


# The French Paracelsians



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The far-reaching debates arising from the development of chemistry and its application to medicine during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the subjects of this book. Shortly after the medical authority of Galen had been reestablished in the Renaissance, the Swiss-German firebrand, Paracelsus, proposed a new approach to natural philosophy and medicine utilizing chemistry. The resulting arguments between Paracelsians and Galenists lasted for more than a century and affected the medical establishments of every European country. In France, the confrontation was particularly bitter, with the Medical Faculty in Paris determined to block the introduction of chemistry to medicine in any field. The author discusses these issues not only with respect to pharmaceutical chemistry and the chemical cosmology of the Paracelsians, but also the development of chemical physiology and its struggle with the brand of medicine influenced by the mechanical philosophy of the seventeenth century. The academic acceptance of chemistry is revealed, and the triumph of the mechanists in the scientific academies is shown to have been only partial at best, because the learned journals of the early eighteenth century continued to review large numbers of books inspired by medical chemistry. This persistent interest in medical chemistry is shown to be significant to the Chemical Revolution and an aspect of the Scientific Revolution that deserves recognition by historians.

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