

## **Fermentation in Thomas Willis' works (1621-1675)**

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The focus of the present study is the research on the concept of fermentation contained in the treatises by the doctor and natural philosopher, Thomas Willis (1627-1675). Willis studied medicine and wrote numerous works, which for a long time were considered to be “neurological” by the historiography. However, I attempted to interpret the medical and chemical thinking contained in Willis' works within a historical and conceptual context closer to the problems and ideas that actually moved the natural philosophers in seventeenth century England.

For this purpose, I analyzed a part of one of the treatises published by Willis in 1659 under the title *Diatribae duae medico-philosophicae*. I selected the treatise *De fermentatione*, whose intention was to formulate a fermentation theory able to explain the chemical basis of natural and artificial processes as a whole, and the treatment of serious and common diseases in the period, such as fever. In this sense, the incorporation by Willis of certain interpretations, parameters and principles within an explanatory framework for medicine was fundamentally based on the chemistry of the period. I paid careful attention to Willis's academic education and to his social and professional networks and also focused on the theories and ideas that permeated his thinking and emerge in his work.

### **Keywords**

Thomas Willis; 17<sup>th</sup>-century; Fermentation

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