

JOHN M. HEADLEY

Tommaso  
Campanella and  
the Transformation  
of the World



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*John M. Headley*

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*For P.I.K., G.M.M., R.G.W.*

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Ptolemy, who was a great man, had established the limits of our world; all the ancient philosophers thought they had its measure, except for a few remote islands that might escape their knowledge. It would have been Pyrrhonizing, a thousand years ago, to cast in doubt the science of cosmography, and the opinions that were accepted about it by one and all; it was heresy to admit the existence of the Antipodes. Behold in our century an infinite extent of terra firma, not an island or one particular country, but a portion nearly equal in size to the one we know, which has just been discovered. The geographers of the present time do not fail to assure us that now all is discovered and all is seen. . . . The question is, if Ptolemy was once mistaken on the grounds of his reason, whether it would not be stupid for me now to trust to what these people say about it; and whether it is not more likely that this great body that we call the world is something quite different from what we judge.

Plato holds that it changes its aspect in all regards: that the sky, the stars, and the sun at times reverse the movement that we see in them, changing east to west. The Egyptian priests told Herodotus that . . . the sun had four times changed its course; that the sea and the land change alternately into one another; that the birth of the world is undetermined. Aristotle, Cicero, say the same. And one of ours [Origen] says that it goes through an eternal and frequently recurring cycle of death and rebirth; calling to witness Solomon and Isaiah to avoid these objections: that at one time God was a creator without a creation; that he had been idle and then renounced his idleness and set about his work; and that in consequence he is subject to change.

In the most famous of the Greek schools, the world is held to be a god made by another, greater god, and is composed of a body and a soul that dwells in the center of it, spreading by musical numbers to its circumference; divine, very happy, very great, very wise, eternal.

—Montaigne, *Essays*, II, 12

[M]uch I learned . . . how the eclipses in Aries and Libra (equinoctial signs) that will follow upon the great conjunction, together with the renewal of anomalies, will do stupendous things to confirm the decree of the great conjunction and transform the world completely and renew it.

—Campanella, *City of the Sun* (1981), 125–27

Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there  
Live, in what state, condition, or degree,  
Contented that thus far hath been revealed  
Not of earth only but of highest heav'n.

—Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VIII, 175–78

I believe the world grows near its end, yet is neither old nor decayed, nor will ever perish upon the ruins of its own principles. As the work of creation was above nature, so is its adversary, annihilation, without which the world hath not its end, but its mutation.

—Sir Th. Browne, *Religio Medici*, I, 45



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## ABBREVIATIONS

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UNLESS otherwise stated, all translations are my own. The Latin or Italian original will only be provided in the notes when a readily available modern edition does not exist. All biblical references are to the Vulgate: *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. Robert Weber, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1969).

AESC	<i>Annales, Économies, Sociétés, Civilizations</i>
AFP	<i>Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum</i>
AHSI	<i>Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu</i>
Amab., <i>Cast.</i>	Luigi Amabile, <i>Fra T. Campanella ne'castelli di Napoli in Roma e in Parigi</i> . Naples: Murano, 1887.
Amab., <i>Cong.</i>	Luigi Amabile, <i>Fra T. Campanella, la sua congiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia</i> . Naples: Murano, 1882.
Amab., <i>Doc.</i> I, II	Luigi Amabile, <i>Fra T. Campanella: Documenti</i> , I (= Amab., <i>Cong.</i> , III) and II (= Amab., <i>Cast.</i> , II). Naples: Murano, 1882, 1887.
ASI	<i>Archivio Storico Italiano</i>
BeC	<i>Bruniana e Campanelliana</i>
BHR	<i>Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance</i>
BU	<i>Biographie Universelle ancienne et moderne</i>
CHR	<i>Catholic Historical Review</i>
COD	<i>Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta</i>
CT	<i>Concilium Tridentinum. Decretorum, Actorum etc.</i> Freiburg i. Br., 1901– .
DBI	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i>
DHI	<i>Dictionary of the History of Ideas</i>
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique</i>
GCFI	<i>Giornale Critico di Filosofia Italiana</i>
GG	<i>Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexicon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland</i> . Ed. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, and Reinhart Koselleck. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–92.
GSLI	<i>Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana</i>
IPP	<i>Il Pensiero Politico</i>
JEH	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
JHI	<i>The Journal of the History of Ideas</i>
JWCI	<i>The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
LF- <i>Autobi.</i>	Luigi Firpo et al., eds., <i>Autobiografie di filosofi</i> . Turin: G. Giappichelli, 1982.
LF- <i>Bibl.</i>	Luigi Firpo, <i>Bibliografia degli scritti di Tommaso Campanella</i> . Turin: Vincenzo Bona, 1940.
LF- <i>PP</i>	Luigi Firpo, "I primi processi campanelliani . . ."

LF-RC	Luigi Firpo, <i>Ricerche Campanelliane</i> . Florence: G. C. Sansoni, 1947.
LF-Suppliz.	Luigi Firpo, ed., <i>Il supplizio di Tommaso Campanella</i> . Rome: Salerno, 1985.
LF-Tutte	Luigi Firpo, ed., <i>Tutte le opere di Tommaso Campanella</i> . N.p.: Arnoldo Mondadori, 1954.
Mers.	Correspondance du P. Marin Mersenne, <i>Religieux minime</i> . Ed. Paul Tannery, Cornelis de Waard, and Réne Pintard. Paris: CNRS, 1936.
MPG	Migne, <i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
MPL	Migne, <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
NBG	<i>Nouvelle Biographie Générale</i>
NDP	<i>Nuovi Documenti sui Processi di Tommaso Campanella</i>
NZfMW	<i>Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft</i>
Op. GG	<i>Opere di Galileo Galilei</i>
Pauly-Wissowa	<i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von George Wissowa. Stuttgart, 1937
PP	<i>Past and Present</i>
RCSF	<i>Rivista Critica di Storia della Filosofia</i>
RF	<i>Rivista di Filosofia</i>
RFNs	<i>Rivista de Filosofia Neo-scholastica</i>
RQ	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i>
RSF	<i>Rivista di Storia della Filosofia</i>
RSI	<i>Rivista Storica Italiana</i>
SCJ	<i>Sixteenth Century Journal</i>
SS	<i>Studi Storici</i>
TC-AfP	<i>Aforismi Politici con sommari</i>
TC-AP	<i>Articoli prophetales</i>
TC-Apol.	<i>Apologia pro Galileo</i>
TC-Astr.	<i>Astrologicorum libri vii</i>
TC-AT	<i>Atheismus Triumphatus seu Reductio ad religionem per scientiarum veritates . . . contra Antichristianismum Achitophellisticum</i>
TC-AV	<i>Antiveneti</i>
TC-CA	<i>Consultationes Aphoristicae</i>
TC-Comm.	"Commentaria." In <i>Opere letterarie di Tommaso Campanella</i> . Ed. Lina Bolzoni. Turin: UTET, 1977.
TC-CS	<i>La Città del Sole</i>
TC-De gent.	<i>De Gentilismo non retinendo</i>
TC-DG	<i>Documenta ad Gallorum nationem</i>
TC-DMI	<i>Idee politiche di Tommaso Campanella nel 1636, Due memoriali inediti</i>
TC-DPI	<i>Discorsi ai principi d'Italia</i>
TC-DPLC	<i>Dialogo politico contro Luterani e Calvinisti</i> . Lanciano: Carabba, 1911.

TC-DSCM	<i>Del senso delle cose e della magia</i>
TC-DUGE	<i>Discorsi universali del governo ecclesiastico per far una gregge e un pastor</i>
TC-LASP	“Liber apologeticus contra impugnantes institutum scholarum piarum”
TC-Lett.	<i>Tommaso Campanella: Lettere</i>
TC-Med.	<i>Medicinalium iuxta propria principia libri septem</i>
TC-Meta.	<i>Universalis philosophiae, seu Metaphysicarum rerum . . .</i> Paris, 1638. Repr., Turin, 1961.
TC-Meta I–III.	<i>Metafisica</i> . Ed. Giovanni di Napoli. 3 vols. Bologna, 1967.
TC-Misc.	<i>Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639): Miscellanea di studi nel 4° Centenario della sua nascita</i> . Naples, 1969.
TC-MM	<i>Monarchia messiae</i>
TC-MM-Disc.	<i>Discorsi della libertà, e della felice suggestione allo stato ecclesiastico</i>
TC-MN	<i>Le monarchie delle nazioni</i>
TC-MS	<i>De monarchia hispanica</i>
TC-MS <sup>1</sup>	<i>La monarchia di Spagna: Prima stesura giovanile</i>
TC-OC	<i>Gli opuscoli del Tommaso Campanella</i>
TC-Op. in.	<i>Opuscoli inediti</i>
TC-Op. Lat.	<i>Opera Latina. Francofurti impresa annis 1617–1630</i> . 2 vols. Turin: Bottega D’Erasmus, 1975.
TC-P <sup>1–3</sup>	P <sup>1</sup> = “Poesie,” P <sup>2</sup> = “Poetica,” P <sup>3</sup> = “Poëtica,” in <i>Tutte le opere di Tommaso Campanella</i>
TC-Po	<i>Poetica</i>
TC-PR <sup>1</sup>	“Disputatio in prologum instauratarum scientiarum ad scholas Christianas,” in <i>Philosophiae realis libri quatuor</i>
TC-PR <sup>3</sup>	“Quaestiones super tertia parte suae philosophiae realis, quae est De politicis,” in <i>Disputationum in quatuor partes suae Philosophiae realis libri quatuor</i>
TC-PSD	<i>Philosophia sensibus demonstrata</i>
TC-QR	<i>Quod reminiscuntur et convertentur ad dominum universi fines terrae</i>
TC-RC	“Risposte alle censure dell’Ateismo Triunfato,” in <i>Opuscoli inediti di Tommaso Campanella</i>
TC-Risp.	Risposte alle censure dell’ “Ateismo Triunfato”
TC-RPE	<i>Realis philosophiae epilogisticae Partes Quatuor</i> (see TC-OP. Lat., vol. 2)
TC-Syn.	<i>Syntagma de libris propriis et recta ratione studendi</i>
TC-T	<i>Theologia</i>
TC-US	<i>Gli ultimi scritti politici di Tommaso Campanella</i>
WA	<i>Luthers Werke</i> . Weimar, 1883– .



## PREFACE

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SINCE the nineteenth century and the fervid period of nationalism, research on Campanella has pursued a few fairly discernible paths. First, scholars, particularly in the field of literature, have continued to worry the question as to the meaning of Campanella's apparent masterpiece, *The City of the Sun*, and the place it occupies in the corpus of his writings. Second, the more philosophically inclined have come to focus on Campanella's *Metaphysics*, the formal, systematic presentation of his thought, all in an effort to suggest its unity and even modernity. But a still more all-embracing question has come to confront students of the Calabrian reformer: that of his orthodoxy and to what extent a natural philosopher, perhaps a deist, was really a Christian. Here in this last respect the publications of the systematic statement of his theology, composed from 1613 to 1624, seem to have laid to rest the earlier doubts of those who place their confidence in a formal, comprehensive presentation of ideas as the most reliable expression of a man's thought. To the satisfaction of one school of Campanella's interpreters he emerges as thoroughly orthodox.<sup>1</sup>

In considering the vast corpus that constitutes his writings, we need to be clear as to our own intention regarding the approach we choose to pursue. Our desire is not to focus on the masterpiece or on either the systematic philosophical or theological statements in order to define what he may have meant in toto or in part, or as the part relates to the whole. Although an informed judgment must be made as to the unity or disunity, the catholicity or heterodoxy, the sincerity or dissimulation in Campanella's thought, the investigator is here not desirous of distilling the philosophical content out of his writings and thereby identifying him with a particular ideology or intellectual tradition. In contrast, historians inevitably ask a less abstract, more extrinsic question in their effort to situate and understand their subject within its historical context. The historian cannot identify the human subject as pure intellect nor its work

<sup>1</sup> Here especially as editor of the *Theologia Romano Amerio, Il sistema teologico di Tommaso Campanella* (Milan/Naples, 1972) and Giovanni di Napoli, *Tommaso Campanella filosofo della restaurazione cattolica* (Padua, 1947). While Amerio admits an earlier period of incredulity on Campanella's part, ending with a conversion in 1603, Di Napoli argues persuasively for his orthodoxy throughout and specifically against any period of juvenile waywardness. See his "L'eresia e i processi Campanelliani," in *Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639): Miscellanea di studi nel 4° centenario della sua nascita* (Naples, 1969), 169-258. For an example of the *Metaphysics*' importance, see its usage in Bernardino M. Bonansea, *Tommaso Campanella: Renaissance Pioneer of Modern Thought* (Washington, D.C., 1969). The most recent systematic study of the *Metaphysics*—Ruth Hagengruber, *Tommaso Campanella: Eine Philosophie der Ähnlichkeit* (Sankt Augustin: Academia Verlag, 1994)—came to my attention too late to be incorporated in the present study.

as an abstract monument of celebration. Rather, he must view that subject as a thinking person expressive of will, passion, and commitment, as well as intellect, reacting to and perceiving his world with an intensity depending upon the particular individual and problem at issue. Thus, if we are to capture the synchronic meaning of Campanella for his age and how he reflects options and potentialities that ultimately failed to bear fruit, we must go beyond the diachronic meaning that would associate him with a particular philosophical tradition; we need to look more to his correspondence, his tracts, his occasional writings and statements wherein he engages and enters into controversy with his age.

In a letter of 1635 Campanella will himself make the distinction between his own formal, comprehensive intellectual statement represented by the *Metaphysics*, which he continued to prize as his enduring legacy, and all his other writings that he here designates as *aforistici*.<sup>2</sup> In short, we seek to confront Campanella where he emerges, in places less of his own choosing than that afforded by the formal philosophical statement. In doing so, we prefer to consider the engaged rather than the contemplative thinker. Neither the brief, enigmatic masterpiece nor the monumental, systematic statements, represented by both the *Metaphysics* and the *Theology*, can be ignored; yet they can be temporarily left to one side, their central import or particular details used as a reference or check to confirm, control, or contrast, all in order to permit a focus upon the extensive body of occasional, unsystematic writings that are at once more revealing of the engaged reformer both in a specific instance and of his historical context. Thus, if it is true that something more than intellect describes the meaning of a man for his age, then a fortiori such pertains to our present subject, Campanella, *l'eterno imprudente*,<sup>3</sup> the born propagandist in the most profound and original sense of the word, a man who is at once all passion, all communication; in the assessment of money, sword, and the tongue for the shaping of human affairs he will characteristically assert the supremacy of the last, the tongue or language, in every instance. In short by weighing the repetition of images, issues, and themes, by sensing the personal commitment to an argument, by appraising the sustained vectors in his overall

<sup>2</sup> TC-Lett., 320. In the course of the sixteenth century the aphoristic mode enjoyed a revival first with Guicciardini and then later with the rising tide of Tactism, reflecting the interest and dissimulation of princes. The very use of the term here for purposes of definition and Campanella's earlier incremental musings on past political practices, *Aforismi politici*, together prove revealing. For the word signifies a defining statement, a distinctive feature, a clue. Aphoristic literature attempts "to formulate evaluations of man and society on the basis of symptoms and clues, a man and a society that are sick, *in crisis*," wherein even "crisis" as a Hippocratic term reaffirms the medical analogue and source. See Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method* (Baltimore, 1989), 124; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572–1652* (Cambridge, 1993), 34, 43–46, 65–66, 76.

<sup>3</sup> D1 Napoli, "L'eresia," 233.

thought, we hope to arrive at a more accurate appreciation of the man's relationship to his age. For it is not what a philosopher formally states and includes within his system of thought that must prevail in our judgment of his work and intent, but what he repeatedly and functionally affirms.

Not reflection and contemplation, productive of the formal philosophical *summa*, but rather assertion, persuasion, indeed proclamation distinguished the majority of Campanella's writings in his engagement with the issues and problems of the age. Yet this is not to deny that he aspired to and realized a formal, abstract, intellectual statement, promoted not only by his comprehensive mind and surging drive for unity but also by the accidents of his own tragic existence, allowing him half a lifetime for reflection in prison, withdrawn from society. Nevertheless his commitment to freedom, most immediately his own personal freedom and, more generally, freedom of thought, shifted the import of his work to the "aphoristic." In this irrepressibly aspiring personality the life of his age is seen as an intersection of crises astronomical and intellectual, political and religious. Prison afforded this Prometheus a vantage point from which to reflect and pass judgment upon the issues that beset European civilization as it approached what in fact proved to be the great watershed in its own development, yet what appeared to Campanella as an ideal, universal fulfillment. And while in Campanella's mirror, that enchanted glass of the mind, the great forces of the age move each to a critical turning point, he defined each often with cunning insight, yet his Christian apocalyptic stance did not allow him to see beyond the turn. Instead, it provided him with a telos. This study seeks to comprehend the interaction between the trajectory of Campanella's questing, perceptive vision and the West at its own most decisive juncture in the first third of the seventeenth century. Through the lens of his mind may be brought into focus the salient issues of the age to be analyzed in terms of a universalist imperative.

Our line of approach is dictated by a question that is historical, not philosophical. We are asking not for the precise definition, coherence, or validity of Campanella's total corpus or part thereof but, rather, how this profound, encyclopedic mind identifies, understands, and relates to his age. This perception of early modern Europe and how Campanella impinges upon his times constitute the goal of this study. His thought reflects and expresses the crisis of the West at the beginning of the seventeenth century on five different levels as major issues: (1) the dismantling of the Aristotelian establishment and the reconstruction of science; (2) an anti-Machiavellism that seeks the revitalization of the Christian religion in its political role; (3) the realization of universal empire through the vehicle first of Habsburg Spain and then later of Bourbon France; (4) the capping of this world order with the Roman universalism of papal theocracy and the ecclesiastical state; and (5) the opportunity afforded by the intersection of America's discovery with the invention of the

printing press to pursue world evangelization on a total, global scale and thus to realize that haunting Johannine prophecy (John 10:16) with its apocalyptic/eschatological ring that there will be one sheepfold and one shepherd.

Of the five contemporary problems that will be defined as major issues or crises the economic/social dimension has not been numbered. There are several reasons for such an exclusion. First, a German Marxist study has exhaustively and quite effectively treated this largely submerged aspect of Campanella's thought.<sup>4</sup> Here Campanella appears less the dreamer than tradition has made him out to be; not only was he the leader of the Calabrian revolt of 1599 but its goals were more expressly social and economic, less astrological, religious, and even political than we have been led to believe. The extremely scattered and oblique nature of the evidence, however, suggests that if economic and social concerns constitute a major issue for Campanella, they belong to another order than the five more obvious ones that we have already defined, and that we are justified in subordinating and assimilating the economic/social to the five. Second, and more substantively, no matter how great and fundamental the economic and social issues are for understanding Campanella and the Europe of his time, they do not constitute a crisis as it is considered here: as a growing tension concerning a fundamental problem that achieves a discernible resolution in the course of the century.

Beginning in 1599 with his arrest and imprisonment, a new period of protracted suffering intrudes upon Campanella wherein perforce he must surrender his role of actor and agent for that of critic and prophet. The validity of this distinction draws support from the generally recognized belief that there is in fact a watershed in Campanella's life dating to the years 1599–1602/6 from the Calabrian rebellion through his trial to imprisonment and to a possible conversion or, at the least, accommodation to the powers of this world. While disagreement prevails as to the exact nature and meaning of his apparent conversion in 1606, most scholars now agree that there occurred a conversion to a more explicit Christianity and certainly to a more prudential posture. Such a shift suggests, as the main line of contemporary scholarship argues, that prior to his trial and imprisonment, the Christianity of the youthful Dominican was nominal, his temperament rebellious, and his preeminent intellectual interests those of the natural philosopher. In the trauma of his own life crisis these qualities did not suddenly disappear but were transformed into a new intellectual amalgam, gradually imparting a different attitude toward the world. With the failure of force to bring in the new aeon, a strategy of persuasion, exhortation, and admonition was to be pursued together with an updated astrology.

Consequently the present study will focus on Campanella and his work after 1599—the mature Campanella—but will not ignore the earlier develop-

<sup>4</sup> Gisela Bock, *Thomas Campanella: Politisches Interesse und philosophische Spekulation* (Tübingen, 1974).

ments in his thought. Likewise his social/economic critique will be considered but as an undercurrent to the larger, more expressed issues of the political and the religious. The embattled European world upon which the Calabrian gazed constituted for him a whole, a unity adumbrating a universal oneness on the eve of its actual shattering and dissolution. The total import of Campanella's life and thought represents a massive effort to drive to a new and consummate level the realization of a unified European political/ecclesiastical order, its expanding learning, and the global extension of the Catholic religion.

More difficult than the problem of the texts to be emphasized and the period of our concentration is the question of the prisoner's credibility, his precise intention. Is he truly a Christian convert or an arrant dissembler? Furthermore, is he to be seen preeminently as a magician, a patriot, an astrologer, an orthodox Christian, or a deist? In varying degrees he could be all of these. Here whatever perspective is adopted must be based upon an informed judgment of the man, as his ultimate priorities emerge from the context of his engaged writings. Scholarship has come to transcend the view that Campanella's works after 1599 are but a continuous simulation. If laced with opportunism, they reveal an adherence to a number of long-range principles in keeping with the integrity of the man's life: the realization of a single, evidently Christian world order; the dismantling of Aristotelianism; the fusion of religion with politics and of religion with science; and the *libertas philosophandi*. Ultimately it is his self-understanding as a new messiah that will establish his essential and continuing integrity. For whatever his role-playing and simulation, they are always controlled and justified, in his own terms, by a transcendent sense of mission and by the continuities and essential consistencies of his beliefs.

The picture emerging is that of a friar who never lost his confidence in and fascination for a natural philosophy of his own devising—a philosophy with dimensions religious, astronomical, and magical to which Christian theology and the Roman Catholic Church might provide an obvious shell and shortly a meaningful sounding board whereby it might resonate and enfold all men. The resulting Christian heterodoxy is an amalgam of science and religion, an expression of late Renaissance thought. But which predominates—the new philosophy or the weight of theological tradition? Or is this “une question mal posée”? The analytic, compartmentalized mind of a later age would force choice and subordination upon what the early seventeenth century experienced as a synthetic, single reality. Perhaps Frank Manuel, in his treatment of utopias, is not far off the mark when he claims that Campanella appears as a Christian in the universal spirit of the current pansophic tradition wherein science and religion strive to achieve a new synthesis for the spiritual renovation of humankind.<sup>5</sup> Yet in context the hard question must still be asked.

<sup>5</sup> Frank E. and Fritze P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), 288.

Briefly, a further query. Beyond the abundance of material and the intense, sustained argument with its own essential coherence, why the strangely bewitched mirror of Campanella's mind in which to consider early-seventeenth-century Europe at the crossroads? For all its obscurely magical and astrological intricacies, so difficult for a modern reader to appreciate, Campanella's entire intellectual endeavor expresses an effort to impose a distinctive order and direction upon the major issues and forces of the age different from that which was shortly to prevail with the new Galilean science and the Leviathan state. In the process of identifying and engaging these issues and imparting in some instances something of his own, he manages to mobilize and deploy for the last time many of the salient principles of late medieval and Renaissance culture, often cast in a curiously modern hue and aligned with the new forces of the age. Indeed modern and antique, new and old juxtapose violently in the person of this reformer, who combines an encyclopedic comprehensiveness of intellect with an amazing intensity of will. He strives to destabilize the regnant forces of what he identifies as tyranny, sophistry, and hypocrisy and to shake the world into a new order.

Yes, the world—both as the universe astronomically conceived and as the given order of all things, globally evident and contemporaneous with our author in the present envelope of time—would be transformed, but on very different lines from those envisaged and sought by Tommaso Campanella.

Only after this work was fairly much completed along the lines of contextualizing the five major issues did it begin to become apparent that the subject required some chapter or section of a biographical nature in order to provide background. For while the Italian intellectual world can hail Campanella as the most outstanding philosophic mind between Ficino at the end of the fifteenth century and Vico at the beginning of the eighteenth, in the English-speaking world he is less than a household word: perhaps because he occupies a position that is so late in the Renaissance and yet strongly suggestive of the baroque, he falls through the interstices of academic programs. Indeed he is hardly known through his important, recognized utopia even by scholars in the field. Thus what we have sketched here almost as an afterthought cannot begin to claim the status of a formal biography. Such an undertaking would need to address more fully the magical, the dissimulative as well as those millennial dimensions, evident in a Fra Dolcino, a Jan of Leyden, even a David Koresh, dimensions that inevitably inhere in varying degrees to any leader of an apocalyptic community. At least, however, the present, relatively conservative portrayal may provide the agent of all this celebration with a measure of flesh and blood and at the same time afford a context as well as a degree of continuity for the complex development and reception of his thought.

Besides acquiring an expectable number of debts in the course of living with Campanella, I have also experienced the ground changing beneath me in the long trajectory of this work's composition. For what had started as a rather lonely, curious pursuit has at its end been drawn into a confluence of intellectual, scholarly interests that gives new attention to the Calabrian. For although not entirely neglected in Anglophone scholarship, as evinced in a notable chapter by the Manuels and another by Frances Yates,<sup>6</sup> Campanella missed the opportunity of being presented to an English-speaking readership by such a distinguished scholar as Paul Kristeller, who decided to omit him from his *Eight Italian Philosophers of the Renaissance* as too political and too diffuse in his philosophy;<sup>7</sup> similarly and more recently Robert Bireley also chose not to include Campanella in his *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* as being again too idiosyncratic, utopian, and universalist for this historian's more restricted purpose. Yet in roughly the same period outside Italy Campanella's politics, medicine, and natural philosophy have been the subjects of individual, extensive treatment.

In Italy modern interest in Campanella has, however, never languished. Here anyone attempting to treat the unencompassable thought and career of Campanella must address the immense, if very different, achievements of two giants of scholarship—Luigi Amabile and Luigi Firpo. While not a professional historian, Amabile provided in the late nineteenth century that vast quarry of Campanellan materials through an impressive mining of European archives, which any prospector on this difficult terrain needs to study carefully; his rendering of an exhaustively detailed biography nevertheless lacked structure and suffered from the overly extended claims as to Campanella's dissimulation. But even more considerable is the contribution of the late Luigi Firpo, who in a long life of devotion to Campanellan scholarship, through his formidable bibliographical talents, mapped out the otherwise impassable landscape of Campanella's tangled productivity in manuscript and early imprints, thus providing the necessary guide for any others venturing upon the subject. So great here is the debt to his *Bibliografia* alone, whatever the need for its *aggiornamento*, that this writer at one point contemplated dedicating the present work to him, in memoriam, only to reject the act as too presumptuous. The continuity and advance of Campanellan studies within Italy and the recovery of interest in Campanella on an international scale draw sustenance from Firpo's splendid enterprise.

Yet what has most contributed to the abrupt burst of scholarly attention

<sup>6</sup> Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago/London, 1964), 360–97.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication, May 23, 1992, and two conversations.

derives from the impressive talents and energies of two young scholars—Lina Bolzoni and Germana Ernst. Through her profound appreciation of and insight into Campanella's poetry Lina Bolzoni has given new dimensions to the subject and in her forthcoming edition of the *Commentaria* she will present that longest single work of Campanella. For her part Germana Ernst through her relentless archival, critical, textual studies has blazed a luminous trail of scholarly achievement beginning with the *Articuli prophetales*, proceeding to a number of archival discoveries, and culminating most recently with a shortly to appear critical edition of the *Monarchia di Spagna*, considered by the present author at the inception of his own studies as something inhumanly demanding and impossible to expect. In short my indebtedness in this respect remains considerable, although she has had no part in whatever inaccuracies and misjudgments occur in this book. Despite her own protests Dr. Ernst has more than anyone else inherited, through her archival sleuthing, the mantle of Luigi Firpo. The growing momentum in Campanella studies culminated only this past year in the founding of the new review *Bruniana e Campanelliana* with Germana Ernst and Eugenio Canone as coeditors, but its first number appeared too late for this study to benefit.

In ways direct and indirect I have benefited from the conversation and counsel of my own immediate colleagues Lucia Binotti, Melissa Bullard, Lloyd Kramer, and Michael McVaugh. From my former student, John McManamon, I have ruthlessly plundered an unpublished paper whose subject I had earlier suggested. I am indebted to Ross Etle Pemberton, current graduate student in Renaissance history, for bringing initial order to the bibliography and abbreviations and to George Garrett in Classics for commenting upon my Latin translations. I continue to be grateful for the generosity and interest of William J. Bouwsma, who volunteered to read the body of the book even before I had thought of adding a biographical section. I owe special thanks to Frances Huemer and to John Beldon Scott for their valuable advice and assistance with the illustrations. To Michael J. B. Allen for his willingness to read section 3 of chapter 7 and to T. C. Price Zimmermann for guidance at a critical moment, I remain indebted. In more than one instance, I appreciated and benefited from the prompt responses of Dr. Leonard E. Boyle, prefect, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. To my two readers, one unknown and the other Anthony Grafton, I wish here to express my gratitude.

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Tommaso Campanella  
and the Transformation  
of the World

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## Prologue

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### NAPLES AND EUROPE IN 1601

IN A CELL of the Castel Nuovo in Naples, June 4–5, 1601, the long ordeal of a Dominican friar that had begun with his arrest twenty months earlier and had seen repeated interrogations and tortures at last reached its climax—a climax marked by the dreadful *la veglia* or “awakener”: the victim is suspended in such a way that only his arms and shoulder muscles prevent his body from coming to rest on a set of wooden spikes; eventually, however, he tires and must allow the spikes to gash his buttocks and thighs until he can once more raise himself. Thus between these positions he must move back and forth. In this instance the torture was being applied in order to determine whether the prisoner was actually mad or simply feigning madness. After forty hours, near death, yet spiritually unbroken, his simulation of madness undiscovered, our prisoner was cut down. According to canon law his insanity had been established: therefore he could not be executed. He was safe—quite safe, for he would remain in prison to write and think for the next quarter century. The man was Tommaso Campanella.

Of what was the prisoner accused? Inspired with messianic purpose and apocalyptic expectation, Campanella had led against the Spanish authorities a popular revolt that included peasants as well as a handful of displaced nobles and at one point involved the cooperation of the Turkish fleet, all in an effort to establish an ideal state, a democratic/theocratic republic as harbinger of a new aeon. The imminence of the year 1600, as well as 1603, the occurrence of a number of natural disasters, the deep-seated popular mood of miracle, magic, and divine expectancy had all contributed to the momentary success of the revolt—one in a series of popular uprisings in the Kingdom of Naples that would be suppressed by the Spanish authorities. The locus of this one had been Calabria.

Calabria is not the first place a historian considers when reflecting upon Europe at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Constituting the toe of the Italian boot, the province could nevertheless claim a glorious past: land of the apocalyptic prophecies of Joachim of Fiore, Calabria was also the country of Pythagoras and Parmenides—the source of truly the first philosophy. Since the early sixteenth century the province together with Naples, the most populous city of Europe, and the so-called Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, had come to be included in the burgeoning global empire of the Spanish Habsburgs. It was a world of dynastic politics, aspiring principalities, and creaking empires,

far removed from the national states of a later era. Nor did the Spanish presence in the Italian peninsula limit itself to the Neapolitan lands but included the duchy of Milan in the central Lombard plain. From thence the Spanish imperial tentacles extended northward down the Rhine and eastward into the Germanies of the Holy Roman Empire to link up with and affirm the Madrid–Vienna axis of family relations between the Spanish and Austrian branches of the Habsburg dynasty. Madrid’s effort to involve its Austrian cousins in its own protracted struggle to suppress the Dutch revolt, Spain’s Vietnam, would prove abortive.

The resources of Habsburg hegemony with its Castilian core and global reach were to be found in the finest infantry of Europe (when it was not mutinying for lack of pay), the Jesuits in their inner European mission to reconquer the Continent for Catholicism, and the returns from the American mines whose receipts would reach their peak in the course of the decade. The enemies of the Habsburg hegemony were the Turk, the Protestants, and France. The last of these, France, the most consolidated of territorial states, seemed encircled by the Spanish/Habsburg colossus; yet the French realm dislocated this encirclement at several points. In 1600 France was beginning to recover from almost forty years of civil/religious wars. This recovery was first registered in Rome, the barometer of European political life, in those successive conclaves which, when selecting one cardinal from their midst to the vicariate of Christ, now recognized in France an effective counterweight to Spanish bullying: the signal went out to the rest of Europe that henceforth Madrid was not to have everything its own way.

Between Spanish Milan and Spanish Naples sprawled the ecclesiastical state of the popes, a territorial state among other European territorial states as Thomas Hobbes himself would shortly recognize. The Rome of the high Counter Reformation breathed a mood of restored confidence in its universal mission. The intellectual/political context of the ecclesiastical capital was hardly conducive to the promotion of a self-critical review and revision of the prevailing philosophy. Indeed the atmosphere of Rome conveyed a peculiar mixture of triumphalism laced with a hard defensiveness only a few years earlier made manifest in a reaffirmation and recommitment to the preeminence of Aristotle.<sup>1</sup> Among the casualties were Pucci, Patrizi, and the poet-philosopher Giordano Bruno, who suffered the spectacular death of being burned at the stake in the Campo dei Fiori on February 17, 1600. The only eyewitness report that we have of his execution related that when, in his last moments before expiring, a crucifix on an extended pole was presented before his gaze, he averted his face in contempt.<sup>2</sup> Linked in the same condemnation

<sup>1</sup> On this point and the purge of Platonists in the last decade of the century, see Luigi Firpo, “Filosofia italiana e controriforma,” *RF* 41 (1950): 150–73.

<sup>2</sup> Mario D’Addio, *Il pensiero politico di Gaspare Scioppio e il Machiavellismo dei Seicento* (Milan, 1962), 25–31, esp. 29.

of Bruno's works were those of another poet-philosopher as well as Dominican friar, Tommaso Campanella.

Imprisonment represented no new experience for Campanella, nor would the present detention even be the last occasion for his confinement, yet it certainly proved to be the longest—a period of twenty-seven years. Shifted among Naples' worst dungeons, sometimes in chains, often in darkness, the man survived. His very survival not to mention his immense productivity remains a monument to the will's triumph and the mind's freedom, whatever the obscurities and tergiversations of his formal philosophy. The astonishing literary output of these years attests to a prodigious memory, a comprehensive, questing mind, and the porous nature of seventeenth-century European prisons. Five decades later another literary giant of an entirely different sort, suffering from a different kind of confinement, would convincingly affirm that the mind is its own place and in itself can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell. Similarly, in his own soaring affirmation of the mind's power and place Campanella reveals a transcendent confidence:

Man lives in a double world: according to the mind he is contained by no physical space and by no walls, but at the same time he is in heaven and on earth, in Italy, in France, in America, wherever the mind's thrust penetrates and extends by understanding, seeking, mastering. But indeed according to the body he exists not, except in only so much space as is least required, held fast in prison and in chains to the extent that he is not able to be in or to go to the place attained by his intellect and will, nor to occupy more space than defined by the shape of his body; while with the mind he occupies a thousand worlds.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *TC-Meta.*, III, 156 (XV.ii.v).



PART ONE

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Biographical Context



## Chapter I

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### TOWARD THE MAKING OF A PROPHET

#### OF THE *REGNO*: CALABRIA AND NAPLES

The traditional *Regno* of the Italian peninsula had decayed over the centuries from being possibly the foremost state of medieval Europe when under the Hohenstaufen emperor, Frederick II, *Stupor mundi*, to the feudal confusion suffered under the Angevins, followed by an apparent rally under the Aragonese after 1442. Subsequent to 1503 under a Spanish viceroy, the *Vicerego* comprised all of the Italian boot south of Rome; in the 1590s it had a population of approximately two and a half million. The richest and most agriculturally productive of the kingdom's nine regions or twelve provinces hovered around the city of Naples; the poorest, most rock-ridden, and most pastoral was Calabria in the toe of Italy. As in the papal states, banditry thrived throughout the kingdom and seems to have peaked in the early 1590s. In Calabria the communes could not meet the fiscal quotas imposed, and the ever-menacing Turks raided the province in 1595. For Calabrians the magnetism of the big city with its allurements of apparently cheap food and ready employment came to be exercised less by Naples than by Messina and Palermo. At the turn of the century one-fifth of the kingdom's total population could be found in impoverished Calabria, where overtaxation figured as a factor in the decline of the silk industry.<sup>1</sup>

At the turn of the century Naples represented the supreme case in Europe of a city undergoing massive urbanization without development or industrialization. The concentration of population, bloated by provincials escaping baronial aggrandizement, promoted and announced a growing tension between city and country.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in 1530 an exploitative baronage, general to the kingdom, started to forsake their country estates for their Neapolitan town houses in order to live near the court of the viceroy; when the expense of urban existence proved too much, they would return to their country estates to oppress more effectively their peasantry and tenantry. The city's most renowned captive would refer to this rhythm in their lives as "running round in the same

<sup>1</sup> Peter Burke, "Southern Italy in the 1590s: Hard Times or Crisis?" in *The European Crisis of the 1590s: Essays in Comparative History*, ed. Peter Clark (London, 1985), 177–90, esp. 178–85.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Marino, "Economic Idylls and Pastoral Realities: The 'Trickster Economy' in the Kingdom of Naples," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 24 (1982): 211–34, esp. 226–27.

circle.”<sup>3</sup> Yet at least for the more prudent members of the nobility, aristocratic families usually lived in Naples only when their children were of marriageable age or when litigation required their presence. Otherwise their forceful presence on their fiefs remained in evidence.<sup>4</sup>

By whatever account, Naples, Neapolis, the “New City,” founded originally by Greek settlers, was one of the greatest cities of late Renaissance Europe and for that matter of the world. Its population exceeding three hundred thousand, Naples rivaled Paris and with Constantinople represented the two most densely populated cities of the Mediterranean—urban monsters, great gorging parasites. Braudel characterizes Naples as being in its simmering disorder, in its excessiveness evident in consumption, in poverty, and in sewage, “the most astonishing, the most fantastically picaresque city in the world.”<sup>5</sup> More sedately and reassuringly, a contemporary guidebook for the many avid visitors and tourists who flocked there, the *Descrittione del regno di Napoli* of Enrico Bacco, first published in 1616 and passing through six subsequent printings by 1671, celebrated the classical past, the many kings of diverse nations, the gardens, the churches, and above all the fortresses of what had by then become a baroque city.<sup>6</sup> Of all the architectural delights of the great city, Castel Nuovo most commanded the eye of any visitor. Crouched at the bay’s edge, its massive walls seemingly evoked from the watery depths, Castel Nuovo had been built by the first Angevin ruler, Charles I, and became the royal residence. Situated nearby directly to the south and again at the bay’s edge stood the supporting fortress of Castel dell’Ovo. Beyond this complex of the two fortresses and the intervening arsenal, the greatest of Spanish viceroys, Pedro de Toledo, had in the first third of the sixteenth century extended the city westward, rebuilt the walls, paved most of the streets, and built the avenue named after him, Via Toledo. Along with this enterprise he expanded the ramparts of the city up the slopes of the Monte S. Martino to Castel San Elmo;<sup>7</sup> enlarged and strengthened, the fortress, glowering downward, sought more to control than to defend Naples. San Elmo constituted the fearsome third of that triangle of pain which would define a life.<sup>8</sup>

For the impact of this splendid city and its nether provinces upon the strenuous, late sixteenth-century visitor we are not dependent upon the contriving of the informed imagination. That oft-quoted, observant traveler, Sir George

<sup>3</sup> Burke, “Southern Italy,” 178–87.

<sup>4</sup> Tommaso Astarita, *The Continuity of Feudal Power: The Caracciolo di Brienza in Spanish Naples* (Cambridge, 1992), 234.

<sup>5</sup> Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York, 1972), 1:345–47.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald G. Gusto, “Preface” and “Historical Introduction” to Enrico Bacco et al., *Naples: An Early Guide* (New York, 1991), xiii–xv, liii–liv.

<sup>7</sup> Bacco, *Naples*, 19, explains that Elmo or Ermo, a corruption of Erasmo, obtained its name from its close situation near an ancient church dedicated there to S. Erasmo.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, xl, 1.

Sandys, youngest son of the archbishop of York, in his return to Europe from the Levant by way of Sicily during July 1612 provides us with contemporary impressions of the area. To the young, fastidious English gentleman no people on earth professing Christ seemed more uncivil than the vulgar Calabrians. The omnipresent tarantula that left its victim hooting and dancing; the thieves and murderers stifling overland travel; the pervasive mulberries, infinite in number, which made the province the chief silk producer of Italy; the popular interest in magic; the watchtowers, alert to the threatened incursions of the Turks, ever lurking off the coast—all made a not altogether favorable impression upon the visitor. Whatever the dangers presented by the Turkish presence, prudence dictated ordinary passage to be by sea and as Sandys' galley nosed its way up the coast first to Paola and then to Salerno, he was brought to the Bay of Naples.<sup>9</sup>

First of man-made features to capture the eye of our traveler, the triangle of fortresses presented itself, knitting together the shore, the ramparts, and the surrounding arc of mountains, each of its three members reworked within recent memory.<sup>10</sup> Thereupon he quickly senses the pulse of Naples:

But now the onely regall Citie of Italy, her royall Court is completely furnished with Princes and Commanders: her Tribunals are pestered with clamorous aduocates, and litigious clients: her streets with citizens and forrainers, in pursuite of their delights and profits: whose eares are daily enured to the sound of the drumme and fife, as their eyes to the bounding of steeds, and glistening of armours. So that she seemeth at this day to affoord you all things but her former vacancy. Being first the receptable of Philosophie, then of Mules, and lastly of the souldiery.<sup>11</sup>

And again he appreciates the dignity of the city's architecture, the rhythms in its life, and the predilections of its population:

Naples is the pleasantest of Cities, if not the most beautifull: the building all of free stone, the streetes are broad and pauer with bricke, vaulted underneath for the conueiance of the sulledge; served with water by fountaines and conduits. Her pallaces are faire, but her Temples stately, and gorgeously furnished; whereof, adding Chappels, and Monasteries within her walles, and without, (for the sub-urbes do equall the City in magnitude) she containeth three thousand. It is supposed that there are in her three hundred thousand men; besides women and children. Their habite is generally Spanish: the Gentry delight much in great horses, whereupon they prounce continually through the streets. The number of carosses is incredible that are kept in this City, as of the sedges not unlike to

<sup>9</sup> George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun AD 1610* (London: W. Barrett, 1615), 250–53.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 253–55.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

horse-litters, but carried by men. These waite for fares in the corners of streetes as watermen do at our wharfes, wherein those that will not foote it in the heate, are borne (if they please vnseene) about the City. None do weare weapons, without speciall admittance, but the souldiery. Their women are beholding to Nature for much beauty, or to cunning arte for a not to be discerned impostury: howsoever, they excell in favour which arte can have no hand in. They are elegantly clothed, and silke is a work-day weare for the wife of the meanest artificer. They are not altogether so strictly guarded as in other places of Italie: perhaps lesse tempted in regard of the number of allowed Curtizans, there being of them in the City about thirty thousand.<sup>12</sup>

While briefly noting such destabilizing factors as a faction-ridden nobility and the involvement of popes in the election of Neapolitan kings, Sandys found most sinister the strategic garrisoning of a considerable Spanish soldiery upon the kingdom's population, "who may obey perhaps with as much love, as gally-slaves obey those that have deprived them of their fortunes and libertie."<sup>13</sup>

But such outward features failed to conceal the more profound, long-current political, social, and economic forces that determined the life of the *Regno*. Accompanying the repeated revolts, ominously associated with the explosive energies of the huddled, urban masses of Naples itself, developed the constant slippage of wealth and power to a well-established landed aristocracy. For with the possible exception of Pedro de Toledo's viceregal regime (1532–53), the Spanish government acquiesced in the already existing predominance of the Neapolitan aristocracy and effected no basic social or economic changes. Whereas elsewhere in western Europe public officials were coming to prevail, in the *Regno* Neapolitan landlords grew in their exercise of judicial and administrative powers. The public sale of lands in the form of villages and towns, the alienation of taxes, the disposal of titles, jurisdictions, and shares of public revenue all enhanced the position of the landed aristocracy. From 1590 to 1620 fiscal pressures increased but not upon the nobility. Indirect taxes grew on both exports and internal consumption to the virtual extinction of Neapolitan exports by the late seventeenth century. Habsburg needs, increased by the Thirty Years' War, intensified this fiscal pressure, accelerating and complicating the downturn in the entire southern Italian economy evident since 1580.<sup>14</sup> Most taxes had to be approved by the General Parliament of the kingdom, which comprised only the barons and the representatives of the city of Naples. Both Parliament and city council remained thoroughly under the control of the baronage. Of this last, constituted by six *Seggi*, only one was

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 259.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>14</sup> Antonio Calabria, *The Cost of Empire: The Finances of the Kingdom of Naples in the Time of Spanish Rule* (Cambridge, 1991), 130–32.

representative of the people and could always be outvoted by a simple majority of four of the five aristocratic members. While the Church and its clergy enjoyed their traditional exemptions, the inhabitants of the city of Naples paid no direct tax, which helps explain the demographic explosion that the city experienced during the Spanish period. The fiscal burden fell on the merchant, the peasant, and the ordinary consumer. Almost masterfully, by its compromises with the nobility and by its increasing fiscality at the very time of growing depression, the Spanish government served to draw money away from the more productive enterprises and redistribute it upwards in the social hierarchy, thereby accentuating injustices and inequities.<sup>15</sup>

Beginning in the last decades of the sixteenth century and culminating in the great explosion of 1647, Naples suffered a number of revolts. Such uprisings were usually the result of popular reaction to an increased tax or shortage of bread—a distemper more social than of political or constitutional significance, which could normally be cured by alternate, imported doses of Sicilian grain and Spanish soldiery. In the insurrection of 1585 popular violence came to focus on the people's representative, the master of the merchant guild, accused of private speculation in the city's grain supply. To him fell the grim fate of being lynched, mutilated, and ritualistically cannibalized. In this instance the uprising had manifested an ominous ability on the part of the people to mobilize themselves and even to articulate a political demand for equality of representation on the city council. Thus the authorities had all the greater reason to effect their brutal suppression. The ferocious reprisals and punishments of the restored government evoked from the Venetian ambassador the exclamation: "Such is the terror among the people . . . that I don't think anyone will try anything new for any reason whatsoever."<sup>16</sup> Both for Naples and for the *Regno* in general, events would shortly disprove the judgment of the Serenissima's agent.

#### CALABRIAN BEGINNINGS

Stilo, Catanzaro, Nicastro, and all Calabria itself—of Byzantine and Norman, of Saracen and Angevin intrusions compacted—how many centuries of strife, contention, bitter hatreds, and spiritual exaltation therein layered: the land of Pythagoras, Timaeus, and Abbot Joachim, once fertile and abundant, now harsh, austere, savage, yet capable of nurturing still other sons of intellectual passion.

To Geronimo and Caterina Martello on Sunday, September 5, 1568, in a humble dwelling outside the walls of Stilo, a son was born, who seven days

<sup>15</sup> Astarita, *Feudal Power*, 9, 14, 203, 217–31; Rosario Villari, *The Revolt of Naples* (Oxford, 1993), 7–8.

<sup>16</sup> Villari, *Revolt*, 26–27; idem, "Naples. The Insurrection in Naples of 1585," in *The Late Italian Renaissance, 1525–1630*, ed. Eric Cochrane (New York, 1970), 305–30, esp. 315–23.

later would be baptized in the parish church of S. Biaggio, Giovan Domenico Campanella, but shortly better to be known by his Dominican name, Tommaso. Although his father was an illiterate cobbler, the child early manifested a keen intelligence, a thirst for learning, and an astonishing memory; he readily absorbed the rudiments of grammar and the catechism as well as fitful exposures to available scraps of learning. According to local legend the boy, too poor to pay for his studies, would eavesdrop at the school window and when one of his more fortunate playmates should falter in his recitation, the young, irrepressible Tommaso would seek to prompt him. Distinguished by both precocity and poverty, he would later in a letter to a high-placed ecclesiastic contrast the crushing adversity of his early circumstances with the rich and full endowments of a Pico della Mirandola to whom he had been compared.<sup>17</sup> Indeed his Calabrian roots and context in the last third of the sixteenth century richly endowed the lad with the long-standing evils of the province: “feudal exploitation, Spanish oppression, Turkish incursions, prevalence of monkish idleness, the record of recent Waldensian massacres, recurrent famine, earthquakes, misery.”<sup>18</sup>

Both an important event and an important decision marked his passage to puberty. In his thirteenth year he struggled for six months with a quartan fever. Did it occasion his first exposure to the magical arts of a witch?<sup>19</sup> This extended experience of illness, however, had its constructive effects upon the impressionable youth. For as one who would later write on physiology and medicine and continued to take an active interest in pharmaceutical and medical lore, Campanella early developed an acute awareness of the changes and ailments of his own body, which from this moment became an object of reflection, perception, and experience, and a source for his biomedical knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

At the same time with his family's removal to Stignano his parents considered his joining a paternal uncle in Naples for advancement in the law; Campanella in the following year, 1582, apparently reacting negatively to the allurements of a legal career, took the fateful step of entering the order of St. Dominic and began his year of probation before the novitiate in the small, ancient convent of Placanica, a mile west of Stignano. After taking his vows and assuming the name of Tommaso in 1583, the young novice found himself transferred to the more important convent of the Annunziata in San Giorgio Morgeto. Ever since its foundation at the beginning of the thirteenth century the Dominican order had been central in the teaching and operation of the Church. It had recently received further recognition with Pius V having declared in 1567 St. Thomas Aquinas a doctor of the Church by which time the

<sup>17</sup> *TC-Lett.*, 133.

<sup>18</sup> *DBI*, 17:372–73; *Amab., Cong.*, I, 1–2.

<sup>19</sup> *DBI*, 17:373.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Mönich, *Tommaso Campanella: Sein Beitrag zur Medizin und Pharmazie der Renaissance* (Stuttgart, 1990), 52–53.

Angelic Doctor's theology had come to replace Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as the basic structure of the Church's theology. But before St. Thomas, the young Dominican's future ultimate reference and resort, there was Aristotle: Campanella entered upon a triennial course in dialectic, philosophy, and metaphysics, which exposed him to the *Logic*, the *Physics*, the *Metaphysics*, and the *Soul* by the Master of Those Who Know. Just how long it took Campanella to realize his dissatisfaction with Aristotle—whether in this first three-year period or shortly thereafter—remains uncertain, but it would appear not too long. He must have seemed overly curious, intellectually aggressive, even combative to his teachers, pressed to answer the questions and many difficulties with which their less than docile charge harried them. In quest of more solid fare Campanella began to turn to a broad consultation of the works of Plato, Pliny, Galen, the Stoics, and the atomists, culminating with Telesio.<sup>21</sup> Most probably at this early date he first engaged the potent idea of a plurality of successive worlds, their recurrent conflagration, their structure, if not their nature, periodically destroyed and renewed, the resolution of each in the Divine Fire, which afterwards reconstructs it—themes prevalent among the Stoics, mediated principally by Seneca to Christian thought, to Origen, and most recently to a distraught Christendom by Justus Lipsius.<sup>22</sup> By 1587 Campanella had achieved his philosophical formation in his completion of the triennial, but from 1588 he would abandon the subsequent quadrennial course in theology for the composing of his own first published work.<sup>23</sup>

Transferred for purposes of his studies from San Giorgio Morgeto to the convent of the Annunziata in Nicastro in the fall of 1586, Campanella drafted his first work, a methodological treatise called *De investigatione rerum* (since lost) in 1587. Here he became acquainted with a fellow friar, Dionisio Ponzio, with whom he seems to have found common ground in discussing the impending renewal of the world; a freedom and spontaneity, apparently missing in their formal instruction, marked their conversations together. Campanella's extracurricular readings, pursued confusedly and ill-digestedly in great gulps, culminated when in being transferred again, this time to San Domenico di Cosenza, a friend placed in his hands the first books of Telesio's *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia* in its initial edition of 1565.<sup>24</sup> The very title

<sup>21</sup> LF-Autobi., 273–74; M. P. Lerner, "Campanelle, juge d'Aristote," in *Platon et Aristote à la Renaissance*, XVI Colloque international de Tours. (Paris, 1976), 336–37; *DBI*, 17:373.

<sup>22</sup> Gabriel Naudé's *Thomae Campanellae De libris propriis et recta ratione studendi syntagma* [Paris, 1642], ed., Vincenzo Spampinato (Florence, 1927), 12–13: "statui ipse libros omnes percurrere Platonis, Plinii, Galeni, Stoicorum et Democritorum, praecipue vera Telesianos, ac cum mundi codice primario conferre." On the Stoic idea of recurring worlds, see Jason Lewis Saunders, *Justus Lipsius: The Philosophy of Renaissance Stoicism* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1955), 127, 202–10.

<sup>23</sup> Lerner, "Campanelle," 337.

<sup>24</sup> Luigi De Franco, "Nota al testo," in Tommaso Campanella, *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, ed. Luigi De Franco (Naples, 1992), 738; *DBI*, 17:374. On the Dominican convent at

proved inviting: the elucidation of nature according to its own principles (“iuxta propria principia”), divorced from Aristotelian hylomorphism, could not help but be captivating. Toward the end of his life, looking back upon this fateful encounter, Campanella would register his youthful delight with the *libertatem philosophandi* and with a system springing from the nature of things rather than the opinions of men.<sup>25</sup> Apparently so moved by this new philosophy, the enthusiastic tyro hastened in October 1588 to seek out the octogenarian philosopher, but arrived only in time to be able to affix an elegy to Telesio’s coffin, exposed in the cathedral of Cosenza.<sup>26</sup>

Among his extracurricular authors, Telesio had the enormous attraction of being a living contemporary, a near neighbor at Cosenza, and one who in defying the traditional authorities, presented a coherent alternative system to all those who might be suffering from the suffocating pervasiveness of Aristotle’s philosophy. Even in its earliest stage of development *De rerum natura* represented by its largely cosmological emphasis one of the first efforts to replace Aristotle’s natural philosophy with an original, satisfying philosophic statement of reality. Telesio claimed that Aristotle’s doctrine conflicted with the senses as well as with Scripture and that his own teaching based itself on sense perception and nature alone. He set forth two active principles of all things (heat and cold) and a passive principle (matter). At this stage in the development of Telesian doctrine as first received by Campanella, the bold, incisive criticism of Aristotle and the assertion of an independent, sensate philosophy proved immediately appealing to the young student. Only in the 1586, final edition of Telesio’s great work, which developed in its last five books the biological and psychological issues, would Campanella’s own extreme sensationalism, his exposure to the influence of the Stoic/medical tradition of *pneuma (spiritus)*, and the distinction between two souls, one material, the other infused and immortal, reveal the fundamental impact of Telesio upon his intellectual formation.<sup>27</sup>

Possibly on account of his perceived excesses, Campanella’s superiors now

Cosenza, since 1525 a *studium generale* and together with the Accademia cosentina constituting the preeminent intellectual center for the southernmost provinces of the Mezzogiorno at this time, see the useful article of L. Guglielmo Esposito, O.P., “La biblioteca di S. Domenico di Cosenza,” *AFP* 47 (1977): 439–73, which includes in an appendix (464–70) the sixteenth-century catalogue of the library’s holdings, thus providing a fair conspectus of the theological culture available to Campanella at this stage of his development: e.g., item 47—*In Averroistas de eternitate mundi libri quattuor*. I am grateful to Dr. Leonard E. Boyle, O.P., prefect of the Vatican Library, for bringing this article to my attention.

<sup>25</sup> From the *Syntagma* 13, quoted in Luigi De Franco, *Introduzione a Bernardino Telesio* (Messina, 1995), 385–86. I want to thank the author for once again sending me a copy of his latest scholarship.

<sup>26</sup> *DBI*, 17:373–74.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance* (Stanford, 1964), 97–104.

had him transferred to the small, remote convent of Altomonte, there ostensibly to cool off. Developments proved otherwise. The recent convert to Telesio soon learned of the publication in Rome in 1587 of a work by a Neapolitan jurist, Giacomo Antonio Marta, championing Aristotle over against the principles of the Cosenzan philosopher. Outraged, Campanella ran to the latter's defense in eight books entitled *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, composed between January and the end of August 1589.<sup>28</sup>

The importance of the *PSD*, written in his twenty-first year, derives not only from his formal, pronounced break with and condemnation of Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition but also from his express effort to define a counter-vailing philosophic tradition—eclectic, diverse, but largely to be found among the Platonists. Consequently, philosophy's current affliction he attributes to a tendency to excuse the errors coming down from the ancients, as if our captors, and to deny our own sensible experience. The source of this difficulty lies with Aristotle's books on dialectic from which proceeds a vast confusion of abstract names and obscure terms. Aristotle's philosophy makes claims to divinity and its practitioners refuse to discuss with those who dissent from it. They have no eyes for reality but only for what they find written in his pages. Rather than complacently gargling vapid words, science proceeds by way of things, not names.<sup>29</sup> Campanella appeals to another philosophic tradition that lies with Plato, Pythagoras, Hermes Trismegistus, the Neoplatonists, including the Arabs, coming down through the recovery of Greek texts in Florence to Ficino, Pico, and Patrizi. But Campanella as a Dominican must explain so as to explain away the Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas. This he now accomplishes at the outset of his tormented career in a way that persists throughout. The Angelic Doctor lived in a world addicted to Aristotle, in which the pullulating Aristotelian doctrines made contradiction or disentanglement impossible. He transformed the sense of these texts in the interests of the faith so that an erring or about to err world might properly understand them. In a vein similar to Telesio Thomas is seen as opening up these texts, twisting them back and restraining them from their Aristotelian errors. For the saint was not a follower of Aristotle but of Christ and of the holy theologians ("Christi et sacrorum theologorum") by whom Campanella intends here the patristic Christian Platonists—Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Origen.<sup>30</sup> He will conclude his redrafting of philosophy—less as a history of Western intellectual development and more as a supplement and support to his own emerging controversy with Aristotle—by rooting this First Philosophy with Timaeus, Philolaus, Pythagoras, and the Crotonists of ancient Calabria.<sup>31</sup> His patriotism for Calabria as the birthplace of Greek philosophy, his efforts to

<sup>28</sup> De Franco, "Nota," 735 in *TC-PSD*<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> *TC-PSD*<sup>2</sup>, 4–6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 13–15.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 19–20.

define philosophy beyond the long shadow of Aristotle, and his enthusiasm for the contemporary philosophy of Telesio as a revival of that earlier philosophy articulated in Magna Graecia—the emerging parts of his program adumbrated in 1589—will come into focus a decade later in a sonnet immediately following the abortive conspiracy.<sup>32</sup>

Beyond the preface to the *PSD*, which first announces Campanella's program that will be later elaborated and developed, the value of the total work is considerable for providing us with an appreciation of Campanella's philosophic culture and his textual practices at this formative stage of his intellectual odyssey. Campanella speaks of being visited at Altomonte by two medical doctors, who not only engaged him in extensive philosophical discussion but brought him books of the Platonists and Peripatetics, of Galen and Hippocrates, all to be pressed into service for the defense of Telesio.<sup>33</sup> He draws frequently upon Averroes, Galen, Simplicius, Plato, Plotinus, Albertus Magnus, Ficino, and Nifo, as well as Pico, Hermes, Hippocrates, Philoponus (through Simplicius), Cardanus's *De subtilitate*, and of course Aquinas.<sup>34</sup> In his pursuit of a proof he can be irresponsible and casual in the quoting of his texts. While he correctly observes an absolute fidelity in his citing of Telesio, with Aristotle and other authors he can be general and vague, and compress his own personal considerations into his summaries of their positions. Yet even here there are constraints upon his arbitrariness: in order to make his case he must quote accurately those texts of Aristotle taken over from Telesio. And with Albertus Magnus there are the least instances of distorting the sense of the passage quoted.<sup>35</sup> Through a display of a diversity of texts in this tour de force Campanella manifests a dangerous, youthful exuberance for philosophic independence.

But the import of the months spent by Campanella at Altomonte did not exhaust itself with this single composition. It is here that he came to indulge in Hermetic texts, divination, cabala, and magic, apparently under the guidance of a dark, obscure figure known as Abraham, a young rabbi whom he had encountered and befriended in the populous Jewish communities in this region of Calabria and with whom he would flee from Altomonte at the end of 1589.<sup>36</sup> Campanella's association with this important figure dates according to some later writers from his days at Cosenza, now carrying over to his stay at

<sup>32</sup> TC-*P*<sup>1</sup>, 258/115, 1347/115, 1332/61 (January to February 1600). The practice followed here and henceforth: the first number refers to the page; the second, following the virgule, to the particular item, poem, or document.

<sup>33</sup> TC-*PSD*<sup>2</sup>, 7–8.

<sup>34</sup> De Franco, "Nota" at 741; cf. 62, n. 73 and 799–801.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 741–43.

<sup>36</sup> Giacomo Oreglia, "Campanella in Svezia," in *Studi politici in onore di Luigi Firpo*, ed Silvia Roti Ghibaudi and Franco Barcia (Milan, 1990), 2:55–91, esp. 65.