

PRISCA PHILOSOPHIA, PROPHECY AND POLITICS IN TOMMASO CAMPANELLA

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Abstract. The article examines the role of *prisca philosophia*, particularly the Hermetic and Sibylline sources, in Tommaso Campanella's political thought. It analyses how Campanella employs ancient wisdom in two of his works, *Articuli prophetales* and *Atheismus triumphatus*, to buttress his eschatological views and his vision of universal religious and political reformation. The article argues that Campanella sees sources like the *Sibylline Oracles* and the *Hermetic corpus* as corroborating natural religion and natural law, which he considers foundational to proper politics. Since Campanella explicitly frames the *Atheismus* as simultaneously a theological and a political project, the *prisca sapientia* that underpins it must be understood as doing political work that the *prisca theologia* framework alone cannot adequately describe. By integrating these ancient sources with biblical prophecies and contemporary observations, Campanella constructs a narrative of history connecting past wisdom, present urgency, and utopian aspirations. *Prisca sapientia* offers traces of uncorrupted ancient knowledge that align with his conception of a purified Christianity and ideal universal monarchy. The study reveals how this engagement is integral to his broader project of universal reform, and argues that his appropriation of ancient wisdom constitutes not only a *prisca theologia* but also a *prisca politica*, that is, a recovery of a natural and universally valid order of governance, grounded in the natural unity of moral, spiritual and political authority and prior to any confessional or sectarian division.

Keywords: Hermeticism, Messianism, Political Theology, Prophecy, Sibylline Oracles, Tommaso Campanella

Introduction

The *prisca sapientia* – the ancient wisdom transmitted through a chain of primordial sages – functioned as much more than a mere historical curiosity in Renaissance intellectual culture. It constituted the epistemological bridge between pagan antiquity and Christian revelation, allowing thinkers like Campanella to access and employ non-Christian sources of knowledge while maintaining a semblance of theological orthodoxy. This tradition of ancient wisdom, reconstructed by Renaissance scholars following Ficino's influential translations and commentaries, positioned Hermetic thought and Sibylline prophecy as complementary sources of divine knowledge. Although uncertainties about the texts' origins had already arisen, these

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sources were considered to prefigure and harmonize with Christian doctrine. This framework provided Campanella with one of the building blocks that gave him the intellectual legitimacy necessary for his projects of universal reform.

On 6 September 1599, a day after turning 31, Tommaso Campanella was arrested at Roccella in Calabria, where he had been hiding following a foiled revolt in Stilo, his hometown. The insurrection planned by local noblemen and members of the clergy was intended to overthrow the despotic Spanish rule in those southern Italian lands that fell under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Naples. Campanella was made a scapegoat by the royal authorities, who accused him of inspiring the uprising through his millenarian preaching about the dawn of a new age that would bring about the end of tyranny. A year earlier, Campanella seemed convinced that the end times would be inaugurated by the establishment of “the most admirable republic of the world [...] beginning in the year 1600”.¹

Already in these early years, Campanella’s nascent utopianism was rooted as much in a long tradition of prophecies and arcane wisdom as in a reaction to direct experience of bad government. His projection of an ideal society, which he would famously formulate as the ‘poetic dialogue’ called *The City of the Sun* (*La Città del Sole*) in 1602, served as a call for a universal reform that was to be guided by a ‘return to nature’. The utopian text itself functioned simultaneously as an outline and a synthesis of a far more ambitious programmatic and practical philosophical project which had as one of its main aims a universal reform of knowledge in the light of both ancient wisdom and new discoveries. His project was thus political in the broadest sense of the term: a reform of the structures of society that would place humanity in the best possible position to prepare for the ‘new times’, through a rediscovery of its most authentic – ‘natural’ and ‘innocent’ – state. Such a reform required a careful reading and understanding of human wisdom as it developed over time, coupled with interpreting the ‘signs of the times’ that manifested themselves as much in celestial phenomena as they did in momentous scientific and political developments.

Campanella’s interest in the *prisca sapientia* was propelled by his engagement with more recent authors, ranging from Marsilio Ficino to Tycho Brahe, who had lent credence to its significance. Throughout his works, the appeal to this ancient wisdom served to buttress the narrative that provided a context and a justification for his project of universal reform. Ancient wisdom represented the earliest sources, or traces, of a narrative that he saw as unfolding throughout human history. In other words, reclaiming the *prisca sapientia* was a crucial link in the historiographical chain of perennial wisdom, essential both for properly gauging the present and for guiding anyone planning to reform knowledge and society. Campanella does not dedicate any specific work to the treatment of ancient wisdom. However, references to sources such as Hermetica and the *Sibylline Oracles* abound throughout much of his corpus. A survey of Campanella’s works also shows that practically all mentions of these sources occur alongside other sources drawn from classical antiquity, the Scriptures, and later prophetic writings such as those of Joachim of Fiore (c.1135-1202)² and “the most illustrious sibyl of sibyls” Bridget of Sweden (c.1304-1374).³

The purpose of this article is not to provide a complete examination of how Campanella employs sources of ancient wisdom, but rather to focus on their use in

relation to his political thought. While his works on natural philosophy, medicine, astrology, and magic will not be treated here, it should be stated clearly that these works are part of a broadly consistent project: Campanella's ideas are often intertwined and cross-referenced. On the other hand, since Campanella's political thought cannot be properly understood without the context provided by his prophetic and theological works, I will examine some key instances of allusions to ancient sources in two of his most significant works in these related fields, namely *Articuli prophetales* and *Atheismus triumphatus*. These works are too often overlooked in Anglophone scholarship addressing Campanella's political thought. Moreover, while Campanella's use of the sources of ancient wisdom has been studied extensively in relation to areas such as astrology and magic, this article intends to shed light on its political implications, specifically in terms of his project of universal reform and global governance.⁴

Prophecy and Politics

Soon after his arrest in 1599 and his subsequent transfer to Naples awaiting trial, Campanella set out to write two separate sets of defences, known respectively as the *Prima delineatio defensionum*⁵ and the *Secunda delineatio defensionum*.⁶ The first document is of a broadly juridical nature as its aim was to contest the reasons and circumstances of his arrest, showing how the case against him was legally flawed and procedurally vexatious. The second written defence, on the other hand, tackles a more substantive aspect of the charges of high treason levelled against him: he wanted to reject the accusation that his preaching about the coming of the golden age was nothing more than an act of subversion. Here, Campanella drew from a wide variety of biblical and non-biblical prophetic sources to show not only the orthodoxy of his teaching but also how doctrinally unsound his detractors' accusations were. For if the charges were to stand, they would have amounted to a misrepresentation of his preaching at best, and to disputing the veracity of the Scriptures and the saints at worst. Campanella would soon abandon these two accounts upon realizing that they would be of little help in the circumstances. He had gauged, rather correctly it seems, that his main accusers were less inclined to engage with him and more intent on taking revenge on him by inflicting a punishment that would be exemplary for other potential rebels. Putting his papers aside, he opted instead to begin feigning insanity. He managed to sustain this act for many months and through sessions of torture until he was finally declared insane and thus spared execution. Campanella later returned to the second *Defensio* between 1605 and 1606, elaborating significant parts of the original text and adding new chapters, sources and observations. The subtitle of the original text now became the title of its augmented version: *Articuli prophetales*.⁷

The *Articuli prophetales* reach far beyond the original aim of showing how the prophetic underpinning of a friar's preaching could not be used against him in a criminal and doctrinal trial. In its completed form, the text served as a vindication of natural and supernatural prophecy and of its importance in human affairs. It connects the divine and human realms insofar as it illustrates concordance between the words of those who prophesied through divine inspiration and, on the other hand, natural prophecy which involves reading the signs in nature. The former included chiefly the prophets of the Bible and more recent holy women and men who were held to be credible witnesses of

God's inspiration, but also those arcane ancient sources who prophesied on account of divine revelations through natural reason or seemingly inexplicable manifestations such as frenzy. Natural prophecy, on the other hand, involved reading God's revelations through signs in his creation (nature) including astronomical marvels such as the appearance of stars or phenomena such as floods and volcanic eruptions. Ultimately, Campanella's understanding of *Deus absconditus* is that of a God who is present yet 'hidden' in the mysteries of nature. Prophecy, in this sense, is aligned with scientific discovery as both point towards the knowledge of God through nature.

In the *Articuli prophetales*, Campanella mentions no fewer than five sibyls from classical literature. The first to be cited is the Tiburtine Sibyl and her famous apocalyptic prophecy relating to the suns that represented successive generations leading to the end times. Campanella's reference is clearly drawn from the first volume of Tycho Brahe's *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmata*, as he cites verbatim a passage from the *Conclusio* in which the astronomer links the sibyl's prophecy to the occurrence of the supernova in Cassiopeia in 1572.⁸ This quotation is not found in the earlier version of the *Articuli* and thus represents what is perhaps one of the most significant additions to the final version of the work. Although Campanella is known to have had a photographic memory, the precision with which he quotes from Tycho's text may indicate that the philosopher had direct access to it during the early years of his decades-long imprisonment. Further down in the same *articulus*, Campanella returns to Tycho's text (this time without citing him specifically) and draws a quotation of the prophecy of the Babylonian Sibyl relating to the end times.⁹ He reminds the reader that with these words, the Sibyl had "announced the golden age," and criticizes those who "desire [Campanella's] ruin more than the truth and men's observation of God's judgements." Even if one were not to accept what the sibyls had foretold, Campanella charges in an explicitly autobiographical way, the prophecies of the Gospels about "the sun, the moon and the stars¹⁰ [...] which seem present to me now" ought to afford him sufficient protection against the calumnies of dabblers and wicked persons.¹¹

A concentration of references to the *prisca sapientia* can be discerned in the eighth of the seventeen *articuli* that constitute the text. The title of this article announces how "before the end of time, all nations under heaven must be gathered together under one monarchy and one religion," recalling the original Abrahamic family of nations which would unite for the Messiah's Second Coming. This "golden century" or golden age ("*saeculum aureum*" / "*secolo aureo*") would see the establishment of "the ideal commonwealth in the state of innocence", where the evils brought about by sin would be removed "according to the predictions of poets, philosophers, and prophets of all nations, and according to the natural desire of humanity."¹² Anyone who is familiar with Campanella's thought, and with his political philosophy in particular, will immediately recognize the importance of each of the elements mentioned in this article: peace and unity as a political end subordinate to a higher eschatological end, the character of an ideal society modelled on the return to the state of natural innocence, and the establishment of world governance. For Campanella, who saw 'poetry' and 'history' as part of a continuum, and whose utopianism is thus deeply grounded in reality,¹³ all these elements are as ideal as they are practical, and as theological as they are political. In many of his works, this is seen through the use of biblical prophecies intent on shedding

light on his idea of global governance as a practical means to move closer towards peace and justice, as a ‘remembering’ and a ‘return’ to a state in which all people live “as one flock under one shepherd” (Jn 10:16).¹⁴ The verse from the Gospel of John is cited by Campanella in most of his theological and political works, as well as featuring prominently in the most pragmatic of his theological-political treatises, the *Reminiscentur*.¹⁵ In the *Articuli prophetales*, the verse appears not as a direct quotation from the Gospel but as part of the direct revelation received by Bridget of Sweden as recorded in her *Revelations*. The words “one faith and one clear knowledge of God” are added to the biblical quotation.¹⁶

“All wise men preach and hope for this state [of innocence],” Campanella writes, “and the poets indeed foretold it by referring to it as the golden age.”¹⁷ Leading among these poets is Virgil, who, “taught by the Sibyls [...] sings the beginning of the golden age” in the *Bucolics* (or *Eclogues*), at a time that coincided with the birth of the Messiah. Campanella does recall, however, that another Roman author, Cicero, “abhorred such a [universal] monarchy” (“*abominatur talem monarchiam*”).¹⁸ That Campanella had a predilection for Virgil, and for Dante, is evident in many of his works. It seems that he also held Virgil to be a reliable source that lent credibility to the Sibylline Oracles. A case in point is the ‘messianic’ prophecy of the Cumaean Sibyl, which had captured the imagination of so many authors and preachers since early Christianity.¹⁹ This fitted perfectly with the millenarian apocalypticism Campanella sought to justify. He notes that although Lactantius, in his *Divinae Institutiones*, had written about “many sibyls and poets singing the same song on the golden age,” the list would be too long to enumerate; however, the authority of Virgil’s report of the prophecies of the Cumaean Sibyl in the *Bucolics* should suffice.²⁰

As Momigliano has noted, the reference to the return of Saturn’s reign in Virgil’s *Eclogues* is an exception in that, unlike pagan *Sibylline Oracles* which were almost restricted to individual events, in the prophecy attributed to the Cumaean Sibyl, Virgil introduces a vision that covers the whole of the golden age: “*Ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas; / magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo. / iam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna*” (“The final age of Cumae’s prophecies has come, / Now the great long line of the ages is begun. / The Virgin now returns, and Saturn’s golden regnum”).²¹ This association with exceptional historical changes and with a radical universal reform was taken up consistently by Campanella right until his very last work, the *Ecloga* (evidently a deliberate choice of title). Composed on the occasion of the birth of the Dauphin of France, the future ‘Sun King’ Louis XIV, its introductory verses cite these very verses from Virgil.²² Yet “it is not just the Sibyls and the ancient prophets who foretold the renewal of the world,” Campanella writes in a comment to another verse in his *Ecloga*, “but also recent ones, like Bridget, Catherine, Girolamo Savonarola, Vincent Ferrer, Joachim [of Fiore], Dionysius the Carthusian, and even poets like Virgil, and more recently Dante and Ariosto and Petrarch.”²³ Ariosto, for instance, had introduced a sibylline character called Andronica who foretold the establishment of “one fold, one shepherd” in the fifteenth *canto* of *Orlando furioso*.²⁴

To highlight the universality of the prophecy of human unity, which corresponded to the return to prediluvian unity, Campanella states that he cannot “find any author from any nation – the Moors, the Persians, the Turks, the Abyssinians – who

did not say something in anticipation of such an age.”²⁵ Moreover, Cyrus, the first Achaemenid king who had freed the Jews from captivity in Babylon, is often associated by Campanella with both the biblical figure of Shem, who received his father Noah’s blessing, and the prophet Daniel, whose eponymous book in the Old Testament foreshadows the apocalypse predicted in the Book of Revelation. Both Shem and Cyrus are seen as prefiguring the relationship between the spiritual power of the papacy and the empire’s ‘corporeal’ power.²⁶ As he discusses the archetypal Cyrus in the *Articuli prophetales*, Campanella references the appearance of a new star in the prophecy of the Tiburtine Sibyl.²⁷ While this sibyl is evoked to indicate the dawn of a new age of unity under a universal monarchy, which Campanella also associated with a reformed papacy, in the thirteenth chapter of the *Articuli prophetales* he surveys several sources of “divine and natural prophecy” to conclude that this golden age of “apostolic sanctity” will be preceded by a time of great desolation for “Roman Christianity,” and for Rome especially: it is only after this “scourge that the renewal of the world will arise.”²⁸ Among the sources cited in concordance with biblical prophecies, we find a quotation attributed to the Erythraean Sibyl, who addresses Rome (“*unde ait Sybilla ad Romam*”) with the words “*Tunc tu purpureo imperii nudata nitore / flebis etc.*” (“Then, stripped of the empire’s purple brightness / you shall cry etc.”).²⁹

Other calamities that were ostensibly to occur before the fulfilment of the golden age included an intermediate “effeminate age” (“*saeculum effeminatum*”), which Campanella saw as coinciding with a period when women ruled or exercised great influence in England, Scotland, Poland, Turkey, Germany, France, Spain, Tuscany, and Hungary.³⁰ It is worth noting here that in *The City of the Sun* women and men receive the same education and carry out the same military functions, but the Solarians show scorn for “the idleness and sloth of women” (who use cosmetics to cover their poor complexion, caused by a lack of exercise) and “effeminate men” existing in societies outside their own.³¹ These references in Campanella’s utopia must be read in the context of sources that equate ‘effeminate’ with moral weakness and decadence. The two sources cited in relation to the catastrophic effects of a *saeculum effeminatum* in the *Articuli prophetales* are: the third chapter of the Book of Isaiah, which narrates the ruin of Jerusalem; and, more precisely, the Sibyl who prophesied the “effeminate age before the end of things.”³² The exact reference appears in the *Sibyline Oracula* (book VIII), where, after foretelling the ruin of Rome and the appearance of stars and comets, the Sibyl predicts that “female rule” (“*foemineum imperium*”) shall follow “the tenth age.”³³

Campanella uses the Sibylline prophecies alongside biblical and classical sources to bolster his own political ideas, and especially the need for religious and political unity. In an appendix to the eighth article of the *Articuli prophetales*, which, as we have seen, contains the highest concentration of references to the *Sibyline Oracles*, Campanella exhorts those who are “incapable of clearly perceiving its sweetness” to stop denying “the holy age.”³⁴ Read in the light of Campanella’s writings, the ability to “clearly perceive” (“*persentiscere*”) is acquired through the careful observation of nature (which aligns with Bernardino Telesio’s doctrine that nature ought to be investigated according to its own principles – *iuxta propria principia* – rather than dogmatically) and through reading and understanding natural and divine prophecies. This has political implications, as Campanella indicates in the appendix written “in response to

philosophers and Machiavellians,” or rather “Machiavellian philosophers who consider this golden age to be [just] a dream” and consider all evils to have natural causes.³⁵ On the contrary, Campanella asserts that most if not all evils are the result of ignorance and sectarian divisions, and that such evils can be eliminated if humanity were to be governed by “one head and one true religion.” This would lead to peace and, consequently, to the advancement of knowledge, to better procreation, better nutrition and better education.³⁶ Campanella conceived the idea of a ‘universal monarchy’, or global governance, in two complementary ways. First, as the ideal community of humankind, based on his idea that the bond of religion – which should be understood in terms of his conception of natural religion and natural law – served as the strongest political bond. Second, as a practical political project founded on the principles of unity in diversity and subsidiarity, which could resolve inequality and ensure the just distribution of resources.³⁷ “I have written about how this may be achieved,” Campanella notes, “in the *Civitas Solis* and the *Ateismo trionfato*.”³⁸

From a *prisca theologia* to a *prisca politica*

Campanella wrote *L'ateismo trionfato*³⁹ between 1606 and 1607, at the same time as he was finalizing the *Articuli prophetales*. The original Italian version was never published,⁴⁰ while a self-translated Latin edition only saw the light of day in 1630/1.⁴¹ The title was suggested to him by the humanist scholar Caspar Schoppe (1576-1649), for Campanella had originally thought of calling the work *Recognoscimento filosofico della vera universale religione contro l'anticristianesimo macchiavellesco* (*A Philosophical Recognition of the True Universal Religion Against Machiavellian Anti-Christianity*), a subtitle he nonetheless retained.⁴² The survey of historical religions and philosophical traditions found in *L'ateismo trionfato* can be read as a revival of the doctrine found in the *prisca theologia*. Campanella aimed to demonstrate that a natural religion (*religio naturalis*), innate to every human being (*religio innata*), exists, and that authentic Christianity is therefore fundamentally ‘natural’. In doing so, the philosopher sought to achieve a second goal: refuting the instrumentalist position of Machiavelli’s followers and interpreters (“*machiavellisti*”), who defended the doctrine of the *ragion di stato* and reduced religion to a mere political tool. Campanella contrasts the position of these ‘politicians’ (*politici*) with that of ‘philosophers’ (*filosofi*), who recognized the natural and rational foundations underpinning both religion and politics, emphasizing their organic connection rather than viewing them as mere human constructs. Campanella maintained that it is on these natural foundations that politics ought to be built, and this is what he means when he claims, in his intellectual autobiography, to have “founded political science.”⁴³

In chapter XV of *L'ateismo trionfato*, the author examines “the precedence of witnesses and their triumph against those who speculate, wherein the calumniators of the Gospel are persuaded” of the truth of Christianity. Here, Campanella criticizes the different sects and factions that continued to disagree in their interpretations of earlier authorities because they insisted on fashioning those authorities to suit their own dogmatic approaches. Their attitude is contrasted explicitly with the Apostles, among whom “one may see great and admirable unity of spirit.”⁴⁴ In a paragraph dealing with the divinity of the historical Christ, Campanella draws upon early sources such as Flavius

Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews* and the Gospels, which he places authoritatively alongside fragments from Hegesippus the Nazarene's chronicles (*Hypomnemata*) and Philo of Alexandria, as well as other accounts collected by Cesare Baronio in his *Annales ecclesiastici* (which he particularly admired and which had led Schoppe to his conversion to Catholicism).

In the 1631 Latin edition (*Atheismus triumphatus*), Campanella added a sentence not found in the original Italian manuscript: "Add to them the testimonies of the ten pagan Sibyls, and Trismegistus and Plato and Socrates, who awaited [Christ's] coming and whose teachings are very similar to his Theology."⁴⁵ Employing the prophecies of the ancients *ex post facto* is of course not an uncommon phenomenon in later literature, yet it is interesting that at this point in constructing his argument for concordance between classical sources and the Gospels, Campanella chose to add this reference to the sibyls in the revised Latin version. This may well have resulted from his closer reading of the *Sibyllina oracula*, which were printed in several editions during the period that elapsed between the first Italian version of *L'ateismo trionfato* and the publication of *Atheismus triumphatus*. At the same time, Campanella was also growing more interested in using non-biblical and non-Christian sources to support his religious (and political) universalism, viewing such primeval wisdom as a genuine *prisca theologia* that was helpful to 'recover' the state of innocence.

Against those he identifies as "Machiavellians," Campanella seeks in *L'ateismo trionfato*, as elsewhere, to "show politicians" that they should "elevate themselves to comprehend Religion better" and realize that human beings possess "an immortal and divine soul, which belongs to another life."⁴⁶ While every animal has some sort of "prophetic" ability to foresee rain or storm or seasonal changes, the philosopher notes, this is "nothing compared to man's natural prophecy, which is done through astrology and many divinatory arts." Moreover, "supernatural prophecy was not given to any animal, for man alone is immortal and gifted with religion and the worship of the true omnipotent God." Aristotle, Campanella argues, had denied heaven and hell, while Socrates and Plato had "wisely" affirmed their existence, as did the Sibyls' prophecies.⁴⁷ The Sibyls are listed several times among the many prophets, philosophers and theologians of all nations who spoke about the ideal republic and the golden century, in which "Christ came to return us to the state of innocence."⁴⁸

In the last chapter of *L'ateismo trionfato*, Campanella notes "with amazement" the concordance between the prophets of the Old Testament and the Apostles with regard to the Second Coming of Christ. He is equally "amazed" by the Sibyls, who "predicted exactly" Christ's life, death and resurrection ("*negotium*").⁴⁹ This alludes to the parts of the *Sibylline Oracles* which ostensibly foretold the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, and which already some early modern authors had assumed to be an early medieval addition. In the section of Campanella's work which touches upon the Second Coming and the establishment of the Universal Monarchy, there is an addition (in bold below) to the 1631 Latin edition that is of even greater significance:

Di più, le Sibille ti fanno stupire, che tutto il negotio di Christo ad unguem predissero; e Lattantio et altri le viddero, e Cicerone dice che la Sibilla predisse un monarca, e li dispiacea, pensando c'havea a perdersi la

Repubblica, e Platone nel libro De sanctitate e De voto aspettava un renovator del mondo e del culto divino, e così introduce Socrate burlarsi di quelli Dei, e che si deve aspettar un che rifaccia il culto del vero Dio; e come hoggi si aspetta il giudicio, così per tutto il mondo si aspettava Christo.

(Campanella, T., (2004 [1606-1607]), 204)

*Praeterea Sybillae admiratione perfundunt quemcunque horum perscrutatore, cum viderit quanta certitudine negotium Jesu totum ad unguem praedixerint. Et Lactantius, alique viderunt scripta earum, et Cicero latine vertit oraculum Sibillae, quae pronunciat Jesum Salvatorem per Crucem. Et fatetur expectari Monarcham Mundi suo tempore, quod tamen illi displicebat, ne Respublica corrueret. Plato et Socrates in libro De sanctitate et De voto expectabant Legislatorem et instauratorem cultus veri Dei. **Trismegistus etiam Regeneratorem hominum et cultus divini instauratorem praestolabatur vocandum Filium Dei, in Asclepio. Et Sybilla eundem expectatum saepe collaudat. Idem Divus Augustinus didicit ab eis.** Et veluti nunc omnes gentes Judicium universale expectamus, sic tunc temporis expectabatur Christus. **Quod Aggeus Propheta Hebraeis significavit dicens: Veniet desideratus cunctis gentibus. Eadem expectatio palam est in Dialogis Trismegisti. Et Judicii finalis et omnium fere dogmatum Christianorum.***

(Campanella, T. (1631), 145-146)

A close examination of the passage reveals that, although other additions exist, the introduction of Trismegistus, along with the reference to the Sibyls, appears most significant in this crucial section near the end of the *Atheismus*. Here Campanella again appeals to *prisca sapientia* to reinforce his eschatological views and his vision for universal religious and political reformation. The reference to Augustine offers a clear indication of the tradition he is drawing from. The Bishop of Hippo may be considered the fountainhead of a tradition – which included Ficino – of appropriating primeval wisdom within a theological framework that was especially Christological and eschatological.⁵⁰ Moreover, Campanella interprets the agreement between Haggai's prophecy⁵¹ and Trismegistus' dialogues (especially the *Pimander*) as further evidence that such prophecies are accessible through natural religion and can provide parameters for political reform grounded in natural law.

Beyond this crucial passage, in his analysis of a vast variety of historical religions and philosophies in a bid to find and connect traces of a *religio naturalis*, Campanella makes some other pointed references to Hermes Trismegistus, which merit a brief examination here in order to illustrate how he placed wisdom derived from the *Corpus Hermeticum* alongside other classical and modern “witnesses” to natural religion and natural law, and, consequently, the natural foundations of politics.

Among the many metaphors Campanella uses to describe the World in *L'ateismo trionfato*, the lesser-known image of the animated windmill stands out. He

employs this metaphor to explain God as creator and invisible ruler of everything: “just as the soul is invisible, and air is invisible, yet it is self-evident in every small thing, as Trismegistus says, if you want to ponder well.”⁵² In *Hermes*, therefore, Campanella reads an authentic *prisca theologia* which, despite possible ambiguities, pointed towards “the true God.” In this context, the reference to Hermes’ “theology” (“*theologia*”) is explicit, as the philosopher decries how the common people (“*la plebe*”) had forsaken the “Roman theology of Varro and [Quintus] Valerius Soranus, of Seneca and other philosophers, and in Egypt Trismegistus showed the true God,” adoring instead “the statues of dead Gods of marble and wood.”⁵³ Yet, in line with his position of ‘anonymous’ faith, Campanella readily concedes that traces of truth can be observed even in pagan forms of divine worship. To sustain this point, he notes how “Trismegistus admires the fact that humans had made statues that talk and created gods who answer them” through oracles, “wherever the law of Christ had not reached.”⁵⁴ Unlike the “mocking Turks, and the Calvinists and the Jews, for whom it does not matter much, for they do not understand the secret and know not that Christ is the first wisdom,” had Hermes been alive, Campanella states, he would not have resorted to ridicule, “nor would the wise sages, who understood such wisdom; it takes great wisdom and love to understand this mystery.”⁵⁵

This Hermetic understanding of the body’s limitations extends to Campanella’s personal reflections on suffering and confinement. In a passage that recalls his own experience as a prisoner, Campanella reveals that he could understand those who see death (including by suicide) as “a way out of prison and burial,⁵⁶ yet he has “much praise for Trismegistus who spoke of the body as ‘a living death, a moveable grave, a garment of ignorance and corruption’, and St Paul [calls the body] a prison of death [...] for those who ponder well, it is so.”⁵⁷ Although he provides no direct reference for his source, Campanella must be citing from one of the many editions of Marsilio Ficino’s translation and commentary of the *Pimander*. Towards the end of its seventh chapter (titled “*Quod summum malum hominibus ignorare Deum*”, i.e., “The greatest evil of man is to not know God”), Trismegistus maintains that the spiritual contemplation of God is hampered by the body, which he describes as the “robe of ignorance” (“*indumentum inscitiae*”), the “bond of corruption” (“*corruptionis vinculum*”), the “living death” (“*vivam mortem*”), the “sentient corpse” (“*sensitivum cadaver*”), the “portable tomb” (“*sepulchrum circumvertile*”).⁵⁸ Although he had experienced the desolation and misery of imprisonment, which became the subject of a good portion of his poetry and correspondence, in his ethical writings Campanella emphasizes that physical confinement is not in and of itself a complete denial of liberty; rather, liberty is lost when evil and ignorance are allowed to prevail. According to the metaphysics of being that underpins his entire philosophical project, the three ‘primalities’ of Power, Wisdom and Love are the very essence of Being in which human beings participate imperfectly, while their corresponding deprivations are tyranny (the misuse of power), sophism (ignorance), and hypocrisy (the lack of love).

The three metaphysical *primalitates* that are perfect in God are inscribed in natural law, which should not be transgressed by any human legislation. As he does elsewhere, in *L’ateismo trionfato*, Campanella evokes historical or mythical founders of civilizations such as Romulus, who “founded his law with arms, and by killing his

brother, as the Turks do, and had no prophecies ...”, and his successor Numa Pompilius, Minos of Crete, and “Trismegistus, King and priest.”⁵⁹ This reference to the amalgamation of regal and priestly authority is exceptionally important in the light of Campanella’s political theology. It presents Hermes Trismegistus as one of the non-biblical archetypes of the bond between spiritual and temporal power, which is to be understood as the intersection of moral and political authority. Trismegistus is again mentioned as an exemplar of political authority grounded in natural moral law, reinforcing a central narrative that permeates Campanella’s prophetic and theological writings. For Campanella, the most fundamental political reformation requires restoring the essential connection between politics and morality (‘religion’). This connection, he argues, has been systematically eroded by Machiavelli’s followers, who have deliberately fostered division and “ignorance” to undermine the moral foundations of governance. Read within the context of the earlier discussion of Campanella’s *Articuli prophetales*, this reformation became urgent with the inauguration of the ‘golden age’.

In a relatively short but closely related work which combines prophecy and politics, the *Monarchia del Messia*, Campanella writes that Trismegistus is “called the thrice greatest precisely because he was king, priest and philosopher.” He cites other historical examples from “many nations of the new world” to show how the combination of political and spiritual power had natural foundations.⁶⁰ This point is made even more explicit further into the *Monarchia*, where Campanella cites approvingly Gregory of Nazianzus’ position that “all laws and ordinances, judgements, and counsels of princes made according to secular knowledge [*scientia*] must be subject to ecclesiastical discipline, just as the body is subjected to the soul.” In support of this position, he mentions Plato, Pythagoras and Trismegistus, “for this is natural law”.⁶¹ In Trismegistus, then, Campanella sees what we might also think of as a *prisca politica*.

The concept of a *prisca politica* is not merely a rhetorical flourish. For Campanella, the recovery of ancient wisdom served a directly political function: by demonstrating that the union of spiritual and temporal authority in a single figure (sovereign, priest, philosopher) was attested across civilizations and epochs, he effectively grounded his vision of universal monarchy in the order of nature itself rather than in contingent historical arrangements. This is what distinguishes his appropriation of Hermetic and Sibylline sources from that of earlier Christian apologists: where Augustine and Lactantius had marshalled the ancient sages as unwitting witnesses to theological truth, Campanella marshals them as witnesses to a natural political order that has been obscured by the very divisions (sectarian, dynastic, intellectual, ‘Machiavellian’) that his reform sought to overcome. The *prisca sapientia* thus becomes simultaneously a theological and a political argument.

Conclusion

Several scholars have highlighted the influence of the Hermetic corpus on Campanella.⁶² These include Frances A. Yates, who emphasised the pivotal role that Campanella’s theological works play in a proper understanding of both his affinity with the Hermetic tradition and its significance for his political thought. In her influential and controversial work on *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*⁶³ Yates dedicated an entire chapter to Campanella, asserting among other things that “the closest parallel to

Campanella's City [of the Sun] is none other than the City of Adocentyn in *Picatrix*.”⁶⁴ Although she readily acknowledged that her chapter was “written with an eye to Bruno retrospectively through Campanella”,⁶⁵ Yates insightfully observed that Campanella aimed to produce “a revised *Summa Theologica*, using the new light from the Platonists and Trismegistus.”⁶⁶

A more thorough treatment of Campanella's writings (including many which had not yet been available in modern editions at the time of Yates' writing) shows that this project employed a rather more eclectic array of sources and benefited from many different ‘lights’ that were shone upon it. Yet there can hardly be any doubt about the influence of the wisdom of antiquity – especially as transmitted through the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Sibyllina Oracula* – on Campanella's theology and, consequently, on the political theology that underpins both his utopian and pragmatic projects.

The *prisca sapientia* serves as an important element in Campanella's theological and political projects, alongside the wisdom derived from a variety of other sources ranging from biblical prophecies to astronomical observations and from the examination of distant cultures to the analysis of human behaviour. Taken together, these sources operate in Campanella's thought as a multi-layered resource: they supply historical precedents for natural religion and natural law, validate his eschatological reading of contemporary events, and – crucially – sustain his vision of global governance by showing that the unity of spiritual and temporal authority was not a Christian invention but a universal feature of legitimate rule. The *prisca sapientia* offers a worldview that connects the past with the future in the present, for the early modern idea of history – which thus included the wisdom and prophecies that emerged over time – is eminently concerned with the present in a deeply future-oriented way. In Campanella's view of history in particular, the writing of history serves as the foundation of the sciences (“*fundamentum scientiarum*”).⁶⁷ While clearly drawing on earlier appropriations of ancient sapiential sources by Christian authors, Campanella is generally less intent on furthering such appropriations than on showing how the *prisca sapientia* aligns with the renewed, purified and more ‘ecumenical’ Christianity he promoted.

The ‘recovery’ of Trismegistus and the Sibyls, together with the ‘return’ to their ancient wisdom, thus become part of his grand design of universal reform. This design Campanella expressed poetically in *The City of the Sun*, while he formulated it in theoretical and pragmatic ways in many of his other works. The Hermetic model of the sage-king – exemplified by Trismegistus as simultaneously sovereign, priest, and philosopher – provided a model for ideal governance that combined spiritual and moral authority with temporal and political power. On the other hand, the Sibylline prophecies concerning the advent of the golden age provided both a general chronological framework and divine sanction for political transformation. Campanella's recovery of Trismegistus and the Sibyls was neither antiquarian nostalgia nor mere rhetorical ornament, but a calculated philosophical intervention: by anchoring his vision of universal reform in sources that predated and transcended any single religious or political tradition, he sought to place that vision beyond the reach of sectarian dispute, and to show that the reformation of politics, no less than the reformation of religion, had its roots in the order of nature itself.

References

- ¹ Amabile, L., *Fra Tommaso Campanella: la sua congiura, i suoi processi e la sua pazzia, vol. 3: Documenti e illustrazioni* (Naples: Antonio Morano, 1882), 164.
- ² See Ernst, G., “Il ruolo profetico di Gioacchino da Fiore nel pensiero di Tommaso Campanella”, in *Il ricordo del futuro: Gioacchino da Fiore e il Gioachimismo attraverso la storia*, ed. F. Troncarelli (Bari: Adda, 2006), 156-158.
- ³ Campanella, T., *Articuli prophetales*, ed. G. Ernst (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1977), 109: “sancta Brigida [...] illustrissima Sybillarum”; letter to Pope Paul V (April/May 1607), in T. Campanella, *Lettere*, ed. G. Ernst (Firenze: Olschki, 2010), 92: “la illustrissima sibilla delle sibille Brigida”; see Falkeid, U., “‘The Most Illustrious and Divine of All the Sibyls.’ Saint Birgitta in the Prophetic Visions of Tommaso Campanella and Queen Cristina of Sweden”, in *The Legacy of Birgitta of Sweden*, ed. U. Falkeid, A. Wainwright (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 277-307.
- ⁴ On the broader intellectual traditions informing Campanella’s appropriation of ancient sapiential sources, see Walker, D.P., *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), and his *Spiritual and Demonic Magic: From Ficino to Campanella* (London: Warburg Institute, 1958), which remains the standard treatment of the *prisca theologia* framework within which Campanella operated. For the political and polemical dimensions of the reception of pagan oracular literature in early modern Europe, see Ossa-Richardson, A., *The Devil’s Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
- ⁵ In Firpo, L., *I processi di Tommaso Campanella* (Roma: Salerno, 1998), 119-169.
- ⁶ In Firpo, L., (1998), 171-213.
- ⁷ Campanella, T., (1977). For the history of the text, see Ernst’s introduction to the volume. The subtitle of the earlier version of the text read: “Articuli prophetales inserendi in defensionibus Campanellae” (“Prophetic articles to be included in the defences of Campanella”).
- ⁸ Campanella, T., (1977), 75-76; Brahe, T., *Astronomiae instauratae progymnasmata*, vol. 1 (Typis inchoata Uraniburgi Daniae, absoluta Praga Bohemiae, 1602), 812. Campanella introduces the quotation from Brahe’s work as follows: “inventa est in marmore scriptura Sybillae Tyburtinae, literis et phrasi antiqua; de qua Gemma Phrysius et Hector Bootus, Scotus, et Tycho, Danus, et alii meminerunt ...”. Considering that Campanella refers to the origins of the three chroniclers of celestial phenomena, the reference to “Gemma Phrysius” appears more likely to be an allusion to the Frisian origins of the astronomer Cornelio Gemma’s (1535-1577) family rather than as a specific reference to his father Gemma Frisius (1508-1555). On Cornelio Gemma see Ernst, G., “Il linguaggio universale dei cieli: Cornelio Gemma, Tycho Brahe, Tommaso Campanella”, in *Cornelius Gemma. Cosmology, Medicine and Natural Philosophy in Renaissance Louvain*, ed. H. Hirai (Pisa-Roma: Serra, 2008), 33-49. Hector Boece (often latinized as Hector Boethius, 1465-1536) lists several prodigies in his work *Scotorum historiae a prima gentis origine* (Paris 1527), including (in book IX, folio CLIX) the prodigious appearance of a comet which, according to Arthurian tradition, Uther Pendragon observed taking the

form of a dragon, a celestial phenomenon that Merlin interpreted as a portent of Aurelius's death and Uther's ascension to the throne.

⁹ Campanella, T., (1977), 78. Apart from slight differences in the use of capital letters and punctuation marks, Campanella's text is identical to that cited in Brahe, T., (1602), 814-815: "Tunc autem signum dabitur Divinitus ingens / Namque relucebit clarissima Stella, Coronae / Assimilis clarae, Coelo splendente renitens. [...] Sole sub occiduo vere vocitata Cometa / Stella relucebit [...] Ast ex quo quarto Stella ingens splenduit anno / Coelitus adveniet Sidus quod per mare magnum / Vibrabit iaciens flammam, Pontumque profundum."

¹⁰ Lk 21:25.

¹¹ Campanella, T., (1977), 78: "Et post hanc eadem Sybilla annunciat saeculum aureum. Igitur nisi quis plus mei ruinam cupiat quam veritatem et vigilantiam hominum super iuditiis Dei, prorsus intelliget non casu nec dolo me ista tractasse. Et licet nullae Sybillae praedixerint haec, attamen sola Evangelii prophetia de signis in Sole et Luna et stellis, et sancti Gregorii argumentum, quo ante mille annos proxima videbantur, quae mihi iam praesentia videntur, sufficienter tueri possunt me a calumniis sciorum et malevolorum."

¹² Campanella, T., (1977), 80. The title of Art. 8 reads: "Ante saeculi finem colligendas esse omnes nationes sub coelo in unam monarchiam ac religionem, adeunte Abraham in semine suo Christo; mundi haereditatem in terra transferendam exinde in coelum; ac futurum multis annis et quando saeculum aureum, statum optimae reipublicae in innocentia, sublatis malis per peccatum invectis, iuxta poetarum, philosophorum et prophetarum omnium gentium vaticinia ac generis humani desiderium naturale."

¹³ See Ernst, G., "«L'aurea età felice»: Profezia e utopia", in *Il carcere, il politico, il profeta. Saggi su Tommaso Campanella* (Pisa-Roma: IEPi, 2002), 61-80.

¹⁴ See De Lucca, J.P., "To Dwell in the Tents of Shem: Noah's Prophecy and Campanella's Universal Monarchy", *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 28/2 (2022): 453-469.

¹⁵ See De Lucca, J.P., "'Ad altiora nati sumus.' Practical Theology and Cultural Diplomacy in Campanella's *legatio* to China", *Bruniana & Campanelliana*, 23/2 (2017): 597-608.

¹⁶ Campanella, T., (1977), 109: "in lib. 6 *Revelationum* cap. 77 dicit Dominus: 'Erit tempus quo fiet unum ovile et unus pastor, una fides, una clara cognitio Dei'"; Bridget of Sweden, *Revelations*, vol. 3: *Liber Caelestis*, books VI-VII, trans. D. Searby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 148: "The Lord answered: 'Tell him: There will come a time when there will be one sheepfold and one shepherd, one faith and one clear knowledge of God'."

¹⁷ Campanella, T., (1977), 82: "Praeterea omnes sapientes universi hunc statum praedicant ac sperant. Poetae quidem sub nomine saeculi aurei illud praecinere."

¹⁸ Campanella, T., (1977), 82: "Cicero vero in 2 *De divinitate* [sic; read *divinatione*] et *De legibus* abominatur talem monarchiam, putatque versus alterius Sybillae, in quorum primis literis exprimitur Salvator per crucem, esse fictitios, quoniam arte mira sunt conditi, et non impetu quodam sybillino." Campanella here notes that Cicero considered the verses attributed to the Erythraean Sibyl (or the Cumaean one, according to other contemporary sources) too artificial to be authentically prophetic. Early Christian

authors such as Lactantius, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Augustine interpreted the acrostic of the Sibylline prophecy as spelling out the name of Jesus Christ. See n. 50 below.

¹⁹ For extensive treatment on the Christian reception of Virgil's sibylline verses, see Hadas, D., "Christians, Sibyls and *Eclogue 4*," *Recherches Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 37 (2013), 51-129.

²⁰ Campanella, T., (1977), 114: "Lactantius Firmianus allegat Sibyllas et poetas multos idem canentes saeculum aureum, quos longum esset recensere. Satis est Virgilius in tertia [sic] eglōga tota allegans Cumeae Sybillae vaticinia."

²¹ Virgil, *Eclogues*, trans. L. Krisak (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), *Eclogue IV*, verses 4-6. See Momigliano, A., "Dalla Sibilla pagana alla Sibilla cristiana: profezia come storia della religione", *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Classe di Lettere e Filosofia* 17/2 (1987): 407-428.

²² See Ernst, G., "«Redeunt Saturnia regna». Profezia e poesia in Tommaso Campanella", *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 11/2 (2005): 429-449.

²³ Campanella, T., *Poesie*, ed. F. Giancotti (Milano: Bompiani, 2013), 423 n. 119.

²⁴ Campanella, T., (1977), 116: "Ariostus quoque introducit Andronicam Sybillam dicentem: 'sotto questo imperatore / solo una greggia sia, solo un pastore'." Cf. Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, vol. 1, ed. S. Debenedetti (Bari: Laterza, 1928), 329 (XV, 26).

²⁵ Campanella, T., (1977), 116: "Nec invenio scriptorem cuiuscumque nationis Maurae, Persae, Turcae, Abassinæ qui non dicat aliquid de huiuscemodi expectato saeculo."

²⁶ See Suggi, A., "E già la statua di Daniele è finita": Profezia e monarchia universale in Tommaso Campanella", *Rinascimento* 58 (2018): 317-343; De Lucca, J.P., (2022).

²⁷ Campanella, T., (1977), 164: "uti et Sybilla Tiburtina vaticinando de nova stella etiam praedixit sub hoc tempore."

²⁸ Campanella, T., (1977), 184. The title of the thirteenth *articulus* reads: "Antequam in sanctitatem apostolicam, inque auream aetatem transeat mundus, Christianismum romanum, et Italiam, ac praecipue Romam, usque ad desolationem vastatum iri; et clerum et papatum destructum iri; et post flagellum orituram saeculi renovationem, ex prophetia divina et naturali."

²⁹ Campanella, T., (1977), 188; cf. *Sybillina oracula*, ed. J. Opsopaeus, Latin trans. S. Castellio (Paris, 1599), 369. In the absence of any other indication, the precision of the quotation may well suggest that Campanella had access to Castellio's translation. The same quotation is found in a letter Campanella addressed to Pope Paul V in September 1606 (Campanella, T., (2010), 68), i.e. more or less at the same time as he was completing the revision of the *Articuli prophetales*. For an overview of *Sibylline Oracles* in the seventeenth century, see Palumbo, M., "La Fortuna degli *Oracula Sibyllina* nel Seicento", *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 11/2 (2005): 493-508.

³⁰ Campanella, T., (1977), 252. Campanella mentions the following: Elizabeth I, Queen of England (1533-1603); Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-1587); Bona Sforza, Queen of Poland (1494-1557); Roxelana (c. 1504-1558), chief consort of Ottoman Sultan Sulciman the Magnificent; Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), Governor of the Habsburg Netherlands; Catherine de' Medici (1519-1589), Queen consort of Henry II of France; Isabella (1451-1504), Queen of Castile and Aragon; Bianca Cappello (1548-1587), Grand Duchess Consort of Tuscany by marriage to Francesco I de' Medici; Mary of

Austria (1505-1558), Queen consort of Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia. He also mentions Camilla Peretti (1519-1605), the highly influential sister of Pope Sixtus V.

³¹ Campanella, T., *Civitas Solis*, in *Philosophia realis* (Paris, ex typographia D. Houssaye 1637), 154, 169.

³² Campanella, T., (1977), 252: “[...] quibus simul ruina promittitur a propheta, sicut et a Sybilla, dicente praecessurum saeculum effeminatum ante finem rerum in articulo magno temporum mutandorum.”

³³ *Sybillina oracula* (1599), 378: “Sed postquam decimum sub terras iverit aevum, foemineum imperium deinceps erit, et mala multa afferet ipse Deus, quando regale decorum femina compta caput, totusque annorum mite saeculum et sol nocturnis currens cernetur in horis.”

³⁴ Campanella, T., (1977), 119: “Cessent ergo saeculum sanctum negare, qui fecibus obruti huius eius odorem suavem persentiscere nequeunt!”

³⁵ Campanella, T., (1977), 118: “Appendix respondens philosophis et machiavellistis. [...] At a philosophis machiavellistis hoc saeculum aureum somnium reputatur.”

³⁶ Campanella, T., (1977), 118: “Ego autem e contra assero pleraque mala hominibus ab ignorantia ac a divisione sectarum et principatuum advenire. Quibus sublatis, sub uno capite veraque una sub religione, pacis abundantia scientias producit, quae vitas longas addunt utentibus generatione ac nutritione et educatione cum virtute sub stellarum positione felici temporibus locisque aptis, et quando sagax natura nec corrupta requirit.”

³⁷ See De Lucca, J.P. (2022).

³⁸ Campanella, T., (1977), 118: “Quomodo autem haec fieri possint, scripsimus in libro de *Civitate Solis* et in *Antimachiavellismo*.”

³⁹ Campanella, T., *L'ateismo trionfato ovvero Riconoscimento filosofico della religione universale contra l'anticristianesimo macchiavellesco*, vol. 1, ed. G. Ernst (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2004).

⁴⁰ The manuscript was discovered by Germana Ernst in the 1990s; on this discovery see Ernst, G., “A Story in the History of Scholarship: The Rediscovery of Tommaso Campanella”, in *Early Modern Philosophers and the Renaissance Legacy*. International Archives of the History of Ideas, 220, ed. C. Muratori, G. Paganini (Cham: Springer, 2016), 277-291: 279-281.

⁴¹ Campanella, T., *Atheismus triumphatus seu Reductio ad religionem per scientiarum veritates [...] contra anticristianismum achitophellisticum* (Rome: Apud Haeredem Bartholomaei Zannetti, 1631; Paris: Apud Tussanum Dubray, 1636).

⁴² Memorandum to Pope Paul V, Emperor Rudolf II, and Philip III of Spain (March 1609) in Campanella, T., (2010), 171.

⁴³ Campanella, T., *Sintagma dei miei libri e sul corretto metodo di apprendere (De libris propriis et recta ratione studendi Syntagma)*, ed. and trans. G. Ernst (Pisa-Roma: Serra, 2007), 11: “Scripsi praeterea *Aphorismos politicos*, quos deinde in capitula distinxi et *politicam scientiam condidi* [my emphasis].”

⁴⁴ Campanella, T., (2004), 198: “tra discepoli di Christo si vede unita grande et ammirabile di spirito”; Campanella (1631), 141: “At inter Christi discipulos unitas spiritus admirabilis.”

⁴⁵ Campanella, T., (1631), 143: “Adde decem Sybillarum Gentilium testimonia, et Trismegisti, et Platonis, et Socratis, expectantium adventum ejus et docentium simillima Theologiae illius.”

⁴⁶ Campanella, T., (2004), 64. The quotations refer to the title of ch. 7.

⁴⁷ Campanella, T., (2004), 68: “Ogn’animale certo ha qualche profetia d’antiveder la pioggia, come le pecore e corvi, le tempeste di mari l’alcioni, l’inverno le formiche, gli parichi paesi le rondine. Ma questo è assai puoco alla profetia naturale dell’huomo, fatta per astrologia e per tante arti indivinatorie, ma la sopranaturale a nullo animale fu data, perché solo l’huomo si stima immortale, ha la religione e culto del vero Dio onnipotente [...] Et Aristotele empio, che non conobbe altra vita, e nega il paradiso e l’inferno, affirmati sagacemente da Socrate e da Platone, poi asserisce la profetia de le Sibille”.

⁴⁸ Campanella, T., (2004), 112-113, 145, 159.

⁴⁹ Campanella, T., (2004), 204: “le Sibille ti fanno stupire, che tutto il negotio di Christo *ad unguem* predissero”; Campanella, T., (1631), 145: “Sybillae admiratione perfundunt quemcunque horum perscrutatore, cum viderit quanta certitudine negotium Jesu totum ad unguem praedixerint.”

⁵⁰ Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, book XVIII, ch. 23. See n. 18 above.

⁵¹ Haggai 2:7: “what is desired by all nations will come.”

⁵² Campanella, T., (2004), 38: “E tutto il Mondo è un molino animato, et ogni animale è simile al Mondo, e Dio fabro è governatore del tutto invisibile, come pur l’anima è invisibile, e l’aria: ma è per sé notissimo in ogni cosella, come dice Trismegisto, se vuoi mirar bene.”

⁵³ Campanella, T., (2004), 146: “E questa è la theologia Romana di Varrone e di Valerio Sorano, di Seneca e d’altri filosofi, et in Egitto Trismegisto mostrò il vero Dio, e lasciò il culto in questo senso alli secondi Dei. Nondimeno la plebe scorse a tanto, che non solo sconoscea il vero Dio, donando a Giove il primato: ma poi le statue de li Dei marmoree e di legname morte adoravano con culto divino.”

⁵⁴ Campanella, T., (2004), 151: “E Trismegisto si ammira che l’huom fa parlar le statue e Dei creava, che li rispondano. Questi donano oracoli e fecero quel che han voluto, dove non arrivò la legge di Christo.”

⁵⁵ Campanella, T., (2004), 174: “Che li turchi si burlano, e li calvinisti e gl’hebrei, poco importa, perché non intendono il secreto, e non sanno che Christo è la prima sapientia. Ma non si burlerà Trismegisto se visse, e li sapienti magi, che di questa sapienza fur intendenti, né senza gran senno e carità si può capir questo mistero.”

⁵⁶ This subject is discussed at length in Campanella, T., *Ethica. Quaestiones super ethicam*, ed. G. Ernst (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2012); see De Lucca, J.P., M. Bertolini, “«Sciolto e legato, accompagnato e solo»: solitudine, alienazione e sublimità in Campanella”, *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia* 80/2 (2025), 159-186.

⁵⁷ Campanella, T., (2004), 78: “E mo conosco che la morte sia un uscir di prigione e di sepoltura, et assai laudo Trismegisto, che chiamò il corpo «morte viva, sepolcro portatile, vestimento d’ignoranza e di pravità», e san Paulo carcer di morte. Et Euripide disse che li vivi erano li morti, e non li morti. E chi ben mira, così è.”

⁵⁸ *Mercurii Trismegisti Pimander sive de Potestate et Sapientia Dei* [Marsilio Ficino interprete, 1463], ed. M. Campanelli (Torino: Arago, 2011), 47.

⁵⁹ Campanella, T., (2004), 188: “Romolo anche con armi fondò la sua legge, e con occidere il fratello, come usano i turchi, e non ha profetie né etc., e con l’imperio già acquistato si mantenne Numa Pompilio la credenza sua, e con dottrina humana senza altri segni, e così Minos, che era re di Candia, e Trismegisto, Re e sacerdote.”

⁶⁰ Campanella, T., *Monarchia del Messia*, ed. V. Frajese (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1995), 59: "Onde Trismegisto s'appella tre volte massimo, perché era re, sacerdote, e filosofo." Campanella wrote this work around 1606, but a reworked version was only published in Latin as *Monarchia Messiae* (Iesi: apud Gregorium Arnazzinum, 1633). In the *Syntagma*, it is referenced as *De monarchia Sapientiae Aeternae* (Campanella, T., (2007), 52), a title never used elsewhere.

⁶¹ Campanella, T., (1995), 137: "... tutte le leggi et ordinationi e sentenze e pareri de prencipi fatte secondo la scienza secolare si devono sottoporre all'ecclesiastica disciplina, come il corpo all'anima, secondo Nazianzeno. E Platone filosofo conobbe lo stesso, e Pitagora, e Trismegisto; perché questa è legge naturale."

⁶² For a succinct overview of Trismegistus in Campanella's thought, see Giglioni, G., "Ermete Trismegisto (Mercurius Trismegistus)", in *Enciclopedia Bruniana e Campanelliana*, vol. 3, ed. E. Canone, G. Ernst (Roma-Pisa: Serra, 2017), 260-270.

⁶³ Yates, F., *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964; repr. London–New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁶⁴ Yates, F., (2002), 404.

⁶⁵ Yates, F., (2002), 396.

⁶⁶ Yates, F., (2002), 413.

⁶⁷ See De Lucca, J.P., "The Art of History Writing as the Foundation of the Sciences: Campanella's *Historiographia*", *Bruniana & Campanelliana* 18/2 (2012): 55-70.