

THE BEGINNING OF THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

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Under the broad theme of utopia, the special issue of *Studii de Știință și Cultură* consists of a series of research papers dedicated to the field of early modern philosophy, history, religion or science. They all focus on the important questions raised by Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*. Structured on three parts, the volume covers some aspects of the research performed in the past ten years in the area of early modern studies. Some papers highlight Bacon's theological foundations of natural philosophy or emphasize the problem of esotericism in his science, while others set forth the Iberian background of the author's project.

In the first paper of the journal, *The Material Foundations of Francis Bacon's Utopia*, the author, Guido Giglioni, (The Warburg Institute, University of London) focuses on the community of Bensalem, where the process of learning is facilitated in all its various forms. As emphasized by Graham Rees, Sophie Weeks and Guido Giglioni, for Francis Bacon, all material bodies are endowed with different active properties described in anthropomorphic terms. This paper also explores the connection between the secret motion of things and the possibility of transforming reality in an infinite number of ways. *New Atlantis* is not a classical utopia, as it analyses Bacon's theory and applications in the political field.

The second paper of the volume, signed by Dana Jalobeanu (University of Bucharest), analyzes Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* as an exemplar of natural history. The connections between the hierarchy of Salomon's House and Bacon's method of experimenting are being discussed, providing at the same time an interpretative framework for diverse seventeenth-century writings which are supposed to be interpretations of the above-mentioned work.

Daniel Garber's (Princeton University) paper regards *New Atlantis* as a puzzling text, focusing on strange customs like The Feast of the Family or on the society called Salomon's House. The author considers that by means of this masterpiece, Bacon tried to give a popular version of his method to the general public. In the attempt of interpreting *New Atlantis*, Daniel Garber comes across

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references to the famous past utopias, i.e. Plato's *Republic* and Thomas More's *Utopia* struggling to explain and to find the meaning of things, ideas, experiments.

In the paper entitled *Of Statues and Vines: Francis Bacon's New Atlantis and the Question of Persuasion*, Sorana Corneanu (University of Bucharest) draws the reader's attention to the topic of persuasion, discussing Bacon's *New Atlantis* as an example of poesy. The author distinguishes three kinds of poesy: narrative, dramatic and parabolic poesy. Themes like those of authority, education or reformation are governed by the question of formation, manipulation and transmission of beliefs. Sorana Corneanu considers *New Atlantis* a parable about the nature of persuasion itself, briefly signaling Bacon's discussion of the art of rhetoric.

Doina-Cristina Rusu (University of Bucharest) has a different approach in analyzing the scientific society of the island in *New Atlantis*, underlining the fact that the novel has very little to offer about the structure and composition of Bacon's ideal community. Rusu claims that Salomon's House is both a society for the production and dissemination of knowledge and also a school of morality. The author has set herself the task of proving that the collaborative research between the members of a society is absolutely necessary for the progress of human knowledge.

Furthermore, Laura Georgescu (University of Bucharest) provides a new perspective over the theological foundations of natural philosophy. She argues for a constitutive role of Bacon's religion, and her aim is to show that his biblical references reveal major philosophical assumptions related to the type of knowledge and universe that is out there.

The second part of the volume brings together the papers of Jacob Halford (Lancaster University) and Silvia Manzo (Universidad Nacional de la Plata, Argentina). As they both investigate Bacon's resources for the ideal society, they also detect similarities between Salomon's House and Tycho Brahe's *Uraniborg*, or between Bacon's imagery and the Spanish imagery. In his paper, Halford argues the origins of Bacon's inspiration for creating such an organization. Silvia Manzo's article explores the role of the Iberian background in the making of Bacon's project of a utopian imperial science. She underlines the fact that the careful observation of the Spanish Empire and of the Jesuits and the Iberian chronicles have supported and inspired Bacon's project of science.

The third part of the volume, under the title *Beyond Solomon's House: Baconian Projects and the Rise of Early Modern Europe*, puts together three papers that formulate interesting questions related to the way in which Bacon's utopia was understood and interpreted by his contemporaries. Focusing again on *New Atlantis*, Grigore Vida (University of Bucharest) highlights the esoteric dimension of Bacon's science, showing that esotericism cannot escape modern science or that the motivations behind it are both voluntary and involuntary.

Oana Matei (Western University "Vasile Goldis", Arad) focuses on a rarely read utopian project of early modernity, namely *A Description of the Famous Kingdome of Macaria*. The author highlights the importance of *Macaria* for utopian literature, interpreting the text in the context of the seventeenth-century Baconianism and of

the Puritan Revolution. Matei provides just a few steps towards the interpretation of Macaria as a Baconian utopia.

In an attempt to understand and explain the scientific revolution, Madalina Giurgea debates the problem of scientific communities at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century. Referring to the past, the author focuses on the diversity of scientific research programmes and on the intellectual figures who contributed to their growth. Therefore, Giurgea tries to identify what is Baconian in our ideal of collaborative science, arguing for the importance of the mediator's activity for the development of the mediator's role, exemplifying in this respect with the case of Marin Mersenne.