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The City Of The Sun: A Poetical Dialogue (La Città Del Sole: Dialogo Poetico) (Biblioteca Italiana)



Synopsis

Among Renaissance utopias, *The City of the Sun* is perhaps second in importance only to More's more famous work. There are striking similarities between Campanella's utopia and More's, but also striking differences which reflect both changed historical circumstances and the highly original nature of Campanella's thought. *La città del sole* is one of many books written by Tommaso Campanella's philosopher, scientist, astrologer, and poet; while imprisoned in Naples for his part in rebellion against the Spanish and ecclesiastical authorities who ruled his native Calabria. This first faithful and complete English translation by Daniel J. Donno is presented opposite the critically established Italian text, with essential explanatory notes and an introductory essay. Students of Italian culture, of the history of science, and of political, philosophical, and religious thought will welcome the publication of this authoritative edition of Campanella's best-known work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* is a utopian literary work that was written in 1602, 86 years after Sir Thomas More's classic *Utopia*. The book is termed a "poetical dialogue," although it is written in prose. The dialogue consists of a Genoese sailor describing to a knight of the Order of Hospitalers of St. John his visit to the City of the Sun, which is located on the island of Ceylon. Almost all of the talking is done by the sailor. The Hospitaler's role is primarily to ask the sailor questions about *The City of the Sun*; he seldom provides a critical response or challenge to the sailor's assertions. The sailor explains that the City of the Sun is built on a hill and defended by a

series of seven great circular walls. Each wall contains paintings that are meant to teach the citizens, the Solarians, "useful knowledge and values" (a sort of educational graffiti). The center of the city is located in a magnificent temple at the summit of the hill. The city is organized to ensure order, security, and companionship for the Solarians. The state has absolute control over the lives of the Solarians--telling them how to dress (they must dress alike), what to eat (simple, healthy foods), what recreation they can have (only physical play to build up their bodies; no sit-down games are allowed), how they can fight in case of war (only defensively), and who should procreate (only the "fit"). Everyone works for the state and, in return, the state provides for the citizen. People eat and work communally. The Solarians are taught the key tenets of all major religions; the state religion is a sort of christianity without Christ. People live in dormitories, and every 6 months they are moved to new quarters to prevent boredom. There is no private ownership or private wealth. The city is run by an elite class consisting of the wisest and ablest Solarians. The key ruler of the city is a person named "Sun" (also termed the "Metaphysician"), who is the most "universally wise." The person "Power" is the war leader, the person "Wisdom" directs scientific advances (they have airplanes and energy-powered ships); and the person "Love" controls all sexual relationships (men and women are allowed to have intimacy "when the astrological signs are right"). Marriage does not exist, nor do families. Women have the same educational opportunities as men and are expected to fight alongside men in case of war. However, the leaders at the top are all men. In spite of the extreme restrictions they live under, the Solarians are "happy with their existence." Overall, I found the City of the Sun an imaginative piece of literature, although I felt it very unlikely that much of it would be possible in view of the innate human hunger for individualism and self-determination. Certainly, I would not want to live in such a place. Campanella also did not consider that the wisest and the ablest people selected from among the elite could be corrupt.

This is the unabridged version, and the best translation I've seen so far. Plus, the book arrived brand-new, as described, and earlier than I expected. So all in all I'm greatly satisfied.

Hitch hiking on a cloud as it passes over islands of wild or tame, peaceful or warring, stopping here but skipping there....

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