

Cosenza - The Exhibition about Bernardino Telesio

The Civic library of Cosenza, on occasion of 500 years since the birth of Bernardino Telesio (7 November 1509), have made a documental and **bibliographic exhibition** where precious volumes of philosophic works are shown. The most prestigious volumes of the exhibition are definitely the two reascent editions of Telesio's "*De rerum natura iuxta propria principia*".

Also shown is the only poem that Telesio ever wrote that is dedicated to the noble Giovanna Castriota, his patron.

The exhibition follows through a philological and chronological path presenting not only the works of the philosopher cosentino but also other authors related to him or to tales of the foundation of the Civic Library.

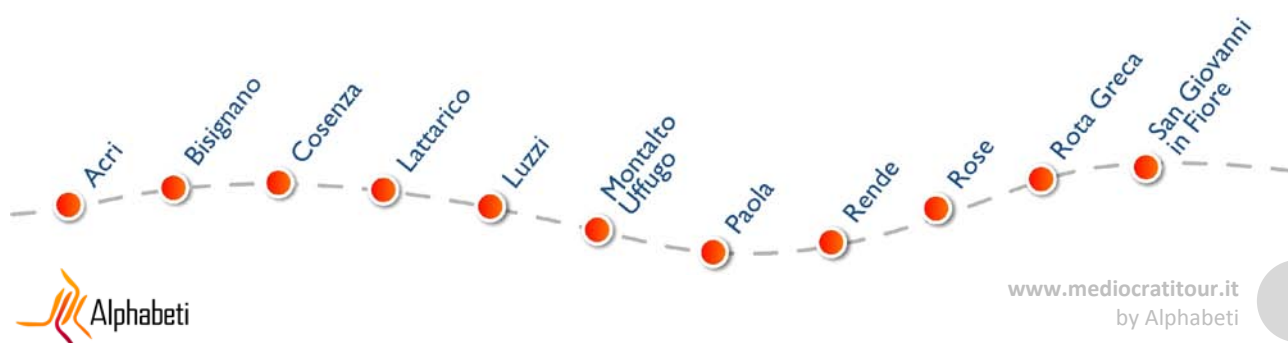
The literate path starts with Parrasio, the founder of the Cosentina Academy to whom succeeded Telesio and, after him, Sertorio Quattromani. These three authors represent a summary of the glorious story of the Cosentina Academy.

The other authors presented are related to the philosophical activity of Telesio: Antonio Telesio, uncle and first teacher to the philosopher, Campanella and Bacone the philosophers who were inspired by his method to elaborate their owns theories, and finally Jacopo Antonio Marta, his antagonist.

Civic library of Cosenza

The civic library of Cosenza is found in the historic city centre and is closely attached to the Cosentina Academy.

The library, in fact, was inaugurated on the 11 June 1871 named *Public Library* due on request of the Academy. In 1873, though, after only two years of activity, the library was closed due to lack of funds, although it continued to allow viewing of texts, sustained by donations of the richer families of the city. In 1898 the library was reopened thanks to the Cosentina Academy, the community and the province of Cosenza renamed *Civic Library of Cosenza*.



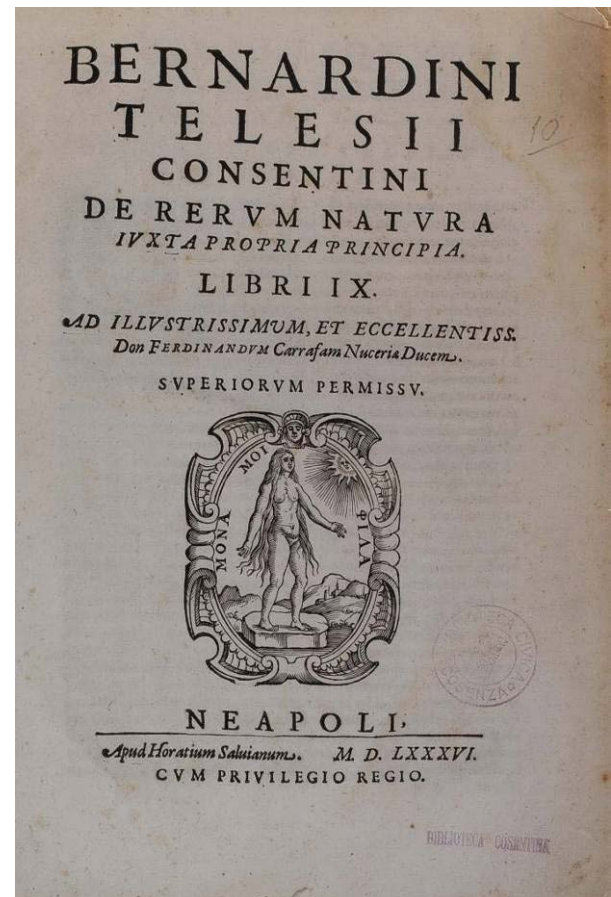
The building which now houses the library was built in the '30's of the last century with enough room to house the Cosentina Academy and the Civic museum also.

The library owns 200.000 volumes of which 20.000 are antiques editions. The 53 editions of books printed when the art of printing was at the very beginning after the invention of Guttenberg, make it the most conspicuous collection of all Calabrian library's. In this collection emerges the works of ancient calabrian typographer Battista de Tortis di Nicastro. The library owns, also, 33 hymn books of the Renaissance with parchment pages, made by the monks of the Cosenza province.

Of notable value is the manuscript section, which consists of parchment documents from the XIII and XVIII century, philosophic texts of the '500's, '600's and '700's, correspondence and letters, autography and inedited texts of stories and calabrian literacy.

In the Sala Salfi of the library a permanent exhibit has been made. Here there are 30 engraved prints that are part of a collection of 100 , that date back to the '700's and '800's, carved by local, Italian and foreign engravers. This exhibit has been cared for by the head librarian Dott. Michele Chiodo, also author of a publication about these prints. Unfortunately due to lack of

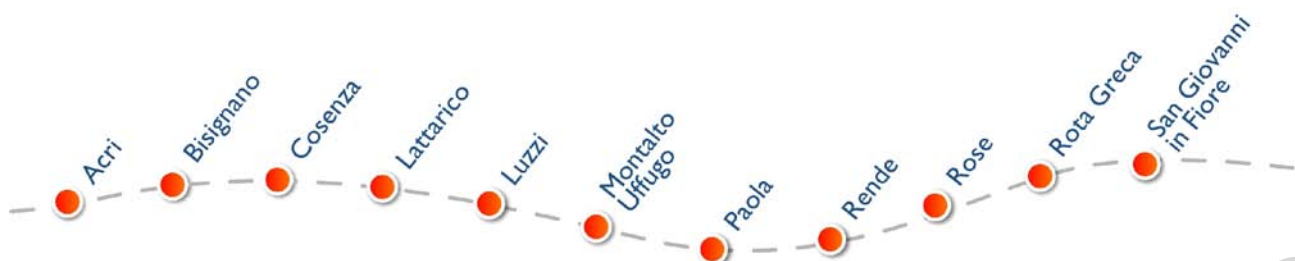
space and the usual problems with economy, it is only possible to show 30 of these 100 prints.



Antonio Telesio

Antonii Thylesii Cosentini. Libellus de colori bus. Ubi multa leguntur praeter aliorum opinionem

Venetiis, B. Vitalis, 1528



Antonio Telesio (Cosenza 1482 – 1534) was the paternal uncle and teacher to the philosopher Bernardino. Giovanni Gentile, in his essay about Bernardino Telesio, tells of the uncle Antonio describing him as a 'humanist learned in Latin and very talented teacher of letters'. The nephew Bernardino followed him out of Cosenza. Antonio Telesio found his fortune in literacy in cities such as Milan, Rome and Naples.

His works, though, were not printed until 1772 in one unique edition cared for by Francesco Daniele, who was able to use the manuscripts conserved in the library of the patrizio cosentino Emilio Giannuzzi Savelli. This picture of Antonio Telesio is contained in the works of Daniele, who also traces the biography.

Aulo Giano Parrasio./Ritratto/. Incisore C. Pignatari

In Parrasio Aulo Giano. *Quaesita per epistolam ex recensione Henr. Stephani...* Neapoli, Typ. Simoniis Fratribus, 1721

Parrasio

Giovan Paolo Parisio, who changed his name to Aulo Giano Parrasio, founded in 1511 the Cosentina Academy and was also Bernardino Telesio's teacher. He was named 'maestro di camera' by Ferdinando II King of Naples. In Rome he taught eloquence at the Pomponiana

Academy and Latin at the Archiginnasio. One of his most important works is "*De rebus per Epistulam quaesitis*".

Present in this exhibition is the "*Quaesita per epistolam ex recensione*", printed in Naples in 1721.

Bernardino Telesio

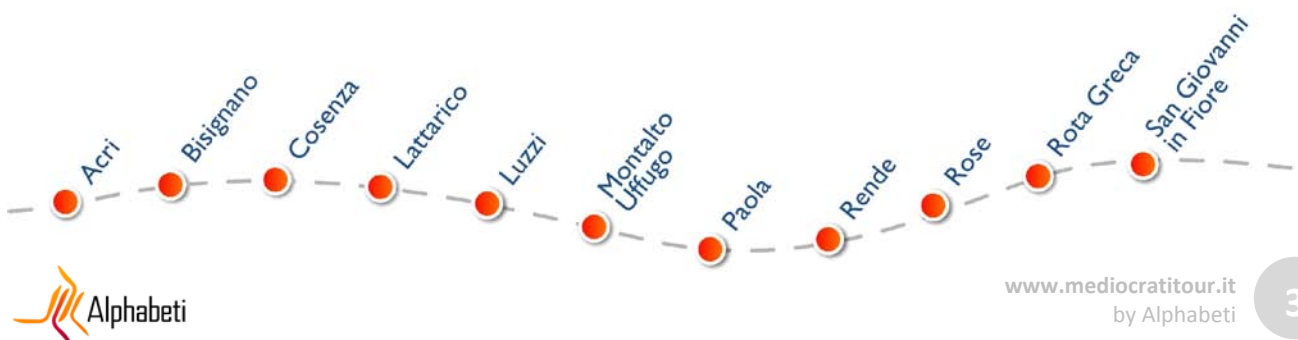
De rerum natura iuxta propria principia liber primis et secundus Romae, Apud A. Bladum, 1565

Mutilated examples of the front cover and the colophon

The Civic Museum of Cosenza keeps the most famous work of Bernardino Telesio, the "*De rerum natura iuxta propria principia*". The first editions of this work shown here are from 1565 and 1570 and are designed in only two books. The edition from 1570 has one particular advantage: the margins of many pages have numerous handwritten glossaries written perhaps by Telesio himself.

De rerum natura iuxta propria principia libri IX Neapoli, 1586

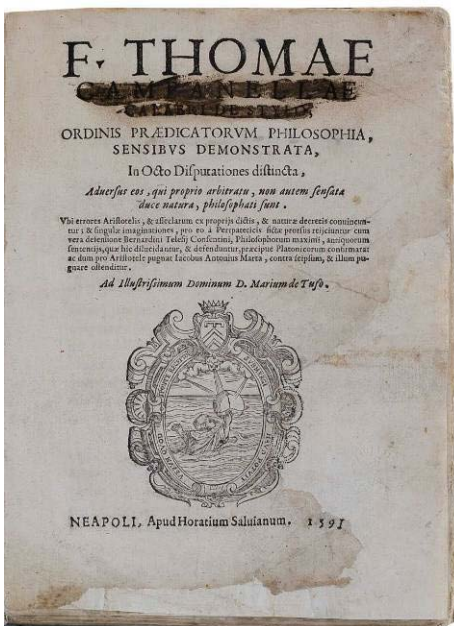
The last edition of "*De rerum natura iuxta propria principia*", the one considered definite, is from 1586 and contains the nine books in one unique volume. On the front page of this shown edition, there is a symbol representing the Verità naked



illuminated by the sun. This symbol represented well Telesios spirit and his works. The entire work of the Cosentino philosopher is dedicated to Ferdinando Carrafa, Count of Soriano, that homed him during his long stay in Naples and was also his patron.

Carmina diversorum illustrium poetarum ad illustrissimam Ioannam Castriotam Vici Aequens, 1605

In this renascent edition, printed at Vico Equense in 1605, one can find the only poem ever written by Telesio and dedicated to the Noble lady Giovanna Castriota, his patron.



Persio Antonio

Bernardini Telesii, Varii de naturalibus rebus libelli Venetiis, 1590

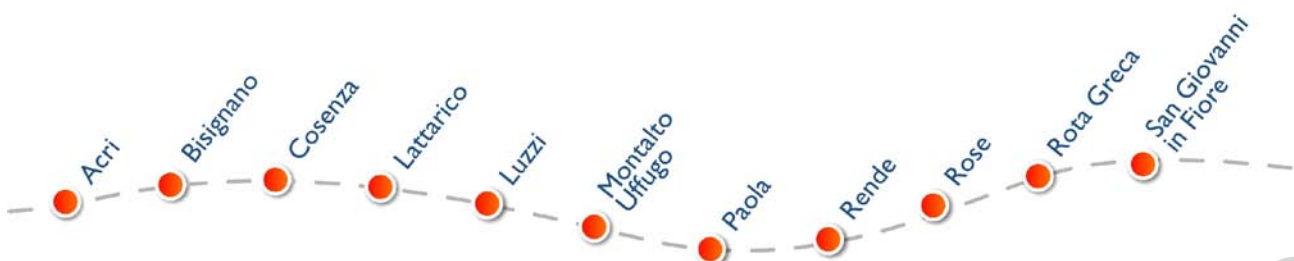
This volume brings together the booklets of Bernardino Telesio. An apprentice took care of this edition, Antonio Persio, in 1590 when he was in Venice.

Antonio Persio met Bernardino Telesio during the years that he lived in Naples.

Tommaso Campanella

Philosophia sensibus demonstrata in octo disputaciones distinta Neapoli, apud H.Salvianum, 1591

Giovan Domenico Campanella was born in Stilo, province of Reggio Calabria, in 1568. Of very modest family, but of strong intellect, he entered the dominical Order to be able to study regularly. After pronouncing his votes he assumed the name of Tommaso. Unfortunately the study that he gained from the Dominicans was not enough to satisfy his lust for knowledge, so he therefore started to read on his own all the books of antique philosophy, especially those papers written by Telesio, following the research method of Bernardino. The *“De rerum natura iuxta propria*



principia”, in particular, was a source of revelation and at the same time a liberation. In 1589 Campanella concluded his first handiwork “*Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*”, a version of a book written by a certain Jacopo Antonio Marta, that in his time had written against the loved Telesio. In 1592 he finished scribing the “*De sensu rerum et magia*”. But it was the publication of his first handiwork that was a cause for scandal in the convent of San Domenico and that cost him his first trial for heresy in 1591. This trial was followed by another four. After the last trials sentence, he passed 27 years in jail at Naples, and it was during these years of imprisonment that he wrote his most important works amongst those “*La città del sole*” (1602).

When he was freed he stayed in Rome for a while but, after another plot against him in Calabria, he was forced to escape to France to the court of Luigi XIII where he lived the rest of his life.

This is the title page of a volume of Campanella conserved in the Civic library, “*Philosophia sensibus demonstrata in octo disputationes distincta*”, in an edition from 1591 printed in Naples.

Francesco Bacone

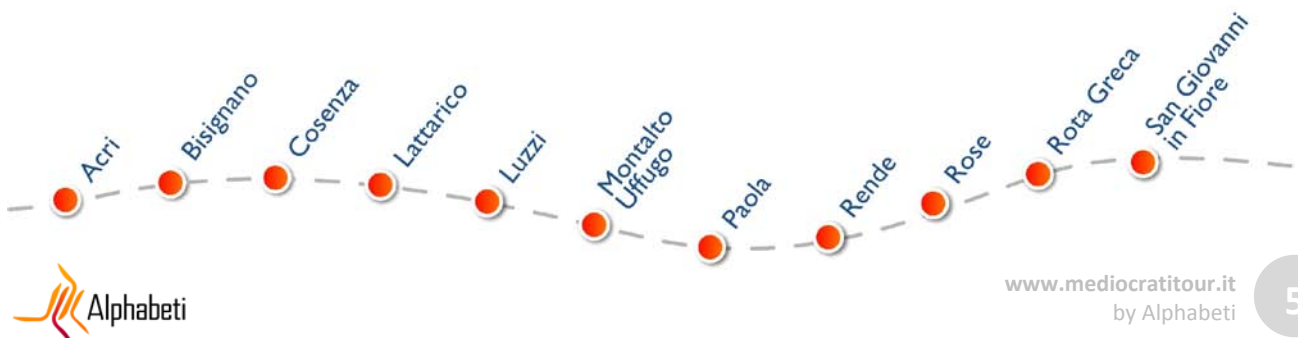
Nuovo organo delle scienze

Translated in Italian with notes and a foreword by the translator. Bassano, 1788

Francesco Bacone (Sir Francis Bacon) was born in London in 1561. He studied law and jurisdiction but became a supporter of the scientific revolution even though he wasn't a scientist. He lived in the English court and was named Lord Chancellor by Giacomo I Stuart. After being accused of corruption he was forced to live a private life, where he dedicated time to his studies. His passion for science drove him to natural experimentation. It was because of one of these experiments about the harsh cold of winter, that he caught pneumonia that cost him his life. He died in 1626.

Bacone considered Telesio the first ‘modern’ thinker of the renaissance.

This is the title page of the work of Bacon “*Nuovo organo delle scienze*”, printed in Bassano in 1788.



Sertorio Quattromani

Ritratto/. Incisore C. Biondi In *Biografia degli uomini illustri del Regno di Napoli, ornata de ' loro rispettivi ritratti Napoli, N. Gervasi, 1812 – 1828 Tomo 4 (1817)*

Sertorio Quattromani was born in Cosenza in 1541. His mother was a distant relative of Antonio Telesio, uncle of Bernardino. He was a literate and his produce was vast. In 1588 he assumed the command of the Cosentina Academy, as was Parrasio's wish, taking over from Bernardino Telesio. Quattromani guided the Academy with firm intellectual contributions in the his last years of arduous intellect.

Sertorio Quattromani died in his birth town in 1603. This volume, intitled "*Biografia degli uomini illustri del Regno di Napoli, ornata de ' loro rispettivi ritratti*", was published between 1812 and 1828. The fourth volume, published in 1817, contains the picture and biography of Sertorio Quattromani.

Marta Jacopo Antonio

Pugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii Romae, 1578

Jacopo Antonio Marta was a Neapolitan jury consult who lived in the XVII century. He was not only known for his law studies but also as a literate. In his younger years he emerged with this work "*Pugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii*", present here in the edition from 1587. On the front page replacing the symbol of the Verità of Telesio, is a hedgehog with prickly spines. Marta used this metaphor intending for his words to "dig in".

