



The Pope and the Heretic

Michael White

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Giordano Bruno challenged everything in his pursuit of an all-embracing system of thought. This not only brought him patronage from powerful figures of the day but also put him in direct conflict with the Catholic Church. Arrested by the Inquisition and tried as a heretic, Bruno was imprisoned, tortured, and, after eight years, burned at the stake in 1600. The Vatican "regrets" the burning yet refuses to clear him of heresy.

But Bruno's philosophy spread: Galileo, Isaac Newton, Christiaan Huygens, and Gottfried Leibniz all built upon his ideas; his thought experiments predate the work of such twentieth-century luminaries as Karl Popper; his religious thinking inspired such radicals as Baruch Spinoza; and his work on the art of memory had a profound effect on William Shakespeare.

Chronicling a genius whose musings helped bring about the modern world, Michael White pieces together the final years -- the capture, trial, and the threat the Catholic Church felt -- that made Bruno a martyr of free thought.

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