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V I E N N A

GIORDANO BRUNO AGAINST GE-A-METRY

AN EARLY MODERN MODEL OF

FRACTAL GEOMETRY

Introduction

There is probably no more appropriate place to talk about Giordano Bruno than Naples. This has primarily, although not only, to do with Bruno's biographical connection with this place. And it also has to do with the circumstance that Bruno has moved strangely in the other direction than the slowly grinding progress of the sciences or philosophy. The project title, "Variantology" which Siegfried Zielinski has given his challenging series, seems to me to aim for movement in a similar direction. It is as though Variantology is a form of preparing for the circumstance that particles, which were believed to be buried deep in the earth, suddenly come to the surface; indeed, are hurled up into the air. I imagine that Variantology is conceived of as engaging with the volcanic powers of the history of knowledge. In this case it definitely is something Neapolitan.

There is scarcely another author with a similarly curious career of productive misinterpretations than Giordano Bruno. The assumption that he is a really important author, philosopher, and scientist has always been the motivation for further interpretations. The certain quality of mystery attaching to his writings, however, does not make it easy for commentators to arrive at consistent results. Today as well, great efforts are made to achieve an adequate understanding of his texts, where often the first step in a new direction is the modification of existing hypotheses that have been applied to these texts.