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Il Caso Galileo: Una rilettura storica, filosofica, teologica by Massimo Bucciantini; Michele Camerota; Franco Giudice

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Convegno internazionale di studi, Firenze, 26–30 maggio 2009. With DVD. Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2011. xiii + 520 pp. €48. ISBN: 978–88–222–6039–0.

The Rome newspaper *La Repubblica* headlined its story about the UN's declaration of 2009 as the International Year of Astronomy "A Year for Galileo and All the Stars." This may sound like hyperbole, but it is actually precise. An Italian initiative, the UN made the year a worldwide celebration of the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first use of the telescope. One of the centerpieces of the numerous festivities was a conference in Florence, nominally under the auspices of a Jesuit research institute, but nineteen sponsors in total lined up, including the President of the Republic. The final event was a roundtable at Galileo's villa at Arcetri. All its participants, although senior Italian academics, had never said much about Galileo. This made clear that the conference was only in part "a historical, philosophical and theological rereading" of his case. Italian politics cast a pronounced "laic" shadow over the event and this volume (the contents of which are not identical to the papers given at the conference). Massimo Bucciantini, for example, author of groundbreaking work about the origins of Galileo's troubles, closed his historiographical essay on the Risorgimento's contribution to Galileo's myth by criticizing the Vatican. The very last piece is another assessment by former Vatican astronomer George V. Coyne of the deficiencies of the papal commission that reported on the case in 1992.

Given this kind of celebratory occasion, it is no surprise that many of the pieces summarize earlier research. Some of these will still prove useful, especially Paolo Ponzio's explication of the theological differences between Roberto Bellarmino, Tommaso Campanella, and Paolo Antonio Foscarini in which he forcefully demonstrates that theology, one of the most durable monoliths in the study of Galileo's case, needs to be broken apart in nominalist fashion.

About Galileo's trial, there is almost nothing new, certainly not in Annibale Fantoli's replotting of ground he has nearly exhausted a number of times before. As-good-as-illegible photographs of one of the key documents "illustrate" his essay. Here as often, the contributors stray outside the bounds of calm historical scholarship in the pursuit of moral and political judgments. One of the pieces that tries hardest to avoid this deviation is Alberto Melloni's study of Vatican II. He starts by taking critical distance from the premise that "the treatment of history as judicial process" ("la tribunalizzazione della storia"), meaning the passing of judgment, can help much. Instead, he brings in many major Catholic theologians and historians of the mid-twentieth century, including Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and Pio Paschini, together with the shade of Teilhard de Chardin, all of whom suffered at least censorship. Melloni describes the unhelpful "slide into [the opposition] science-faith" (476). It produced many oddities, among them the citation of Paschini's formerly banned study of Galileo (finally published during the council in expurgated form) to support the decree *De ecclesia in mundo*, which omitted any reference to Galileo's condemnation.

Two of the most useful pieces are by Federica Favino on the role in Galileo's Roman troubles played by Farnese patronage, and Jean-Robert Armogathe's somewhat misleadingly titled "La condamnation de Galilée: réception et interprétations contemporaines (1653–1663)." Despite its apparently narrow scope, while considering French resistance to accepting Galileo's sentence — as the proper university authorities never did — Armogathe raises the previously unasked question of the legal status of cardinalatial committees. Favino sheds a flood of light on the pivotal role of the Conti brothers, cardinal Carlo and cultivated soldier Lotario (whose mere name the great Galileo scholar Antonio Favaro got wrong), in Galileo's changing fortunes. Also deserving of mention, Luca Bianchi offers an intertextual reading of Galileo's treatment of "the medicine of the end," Urban VIII's argument about divine omnipotence that the pope insisted had to be inserted in the *Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems*. Bianchi demonstrates that Galileo did not go quietly, parodying his Jesuit opponent Christoph Scheiner in the passage.

This collection contains a lot of historiography, furthering the welcome approach pioneered especially by Maurice Finocchiaro. That tack may also, alas, foster the impression that little more can be said about what happened between 1616 and 1633. Nothing could be further from the truth.

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