

key factor in the relative oblivion of his name in the history of early modern science.

These are only a few aspects of a rich volume which provides the reader with a thorough guide to Benedetti's work and with all information and conceptual tools to understand it. The book is accompanied by a rich bibliography, explanatory graphics and reproductions of contemporary engravings of excellent quality. A note on the digital *mise-en-page*: it is easy to navigate through the text, from the reference to the footnotes, from the footnotes to the bibliography, but there is no going back.

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ANNA DE PACE, 2020. *Galileo lettore di Copernico*, Firenze, Olschki, XLII, 638 pp.

Anna De Pace's impressive study on Galileo reader of Copernicus – appeared in the prestigious *Biblioteca di Galilæana* series – consists of four parts and twenty-one chapters, and offers an analytical assessment of Galileo's complex journey into the study and assimilation of Copernicus' *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (1543), in particular the first book. De Pace's monumental research is the result of decades of research by an eminent scholar of the history of modern philosophy who has paid special attention to the links between philosophical and scientific reflection. Chapters 5 and 6 of the book expand on the investigation started in a previous article (*Lo smantellamento del cosmo tradizionale*, 2016); chapter 8 revises her study *Copernico e la fondazione del cosmo*, 2009; chapters 12 and 15 (focusing on Copernican physics and Platonic cosmogony) develop a section of the above mentioned *Copernico e la fondazione del cosmo* and the essay *Galileo interprete del Timeo*, originally published in the volume edited by Guido Canziani entitled *Storia della scienza, storia della filosofia. Interferenze*, 2005. As for the remaining chapters in *Galileo lettore di Copernico*, they are the outcome of studies that De Pace carried out in the last decade and are now published for the first time.

In this new book, De Pace presents an analytical study of the relationship between Galileo's work and Copernicus. In the latter's *De revolutionibus* the former found the basis for a mathematized science of motions capable of unifying the heliocentric planetary circuits and the terrestrial phenomena. This would eventually complement and integrate Copernicus' treatment of celestial motions (p. vii). De Pace disagrees with those scholars who hold that Galileo's writings show no trace of any precise and analytical account of his theoretical debts to Copernicus. True enough, as De Pace admits, Galileo's private letters do not reveal deep appreciation for Copernicus' theories. Likewise, Galileo's 1613-1616 writings do not assess the validity of Copernicus' principles, his physical propositions and – finally – his reflections on the Earth's motion. Galileo was fully aware of the theoretical diffi-

culties in clarifying the contents of Copernicus' work, which he considered to be beyond most people's grasp.

In this regard, studying the *Dialogo sui massimi sistemi* becomes particularly significant. At first, it would seem difficult to find in this work of Galileo either any references to Copernicus or any attempts on Galileo's part to strengthen Copernicus' fragile conceptual apparatus. For these reasons, De Pace believes that for a better understanding of how Galileo read Copernicus, one must first fully understand the *De revolutionibus*. Understanding the first book of this text by the Polish scientist makes it possible to identify the following crucial points, both showing Copernicus' indebtedness to Plato's philosophy: first, the inspiration that guides Copernicus in his redefining physical-cosmological principles; second, the implantation of the μέθοδος (*méthodos*) presented as a demonstrative process. The latter leads us to the true principles behind celestial appearances, thus allowing us to understand the *machina mundi* as a divine work.

The author leads us to decipher a thick 'forest' of references and subtexts that are often implied and far from clear. Thus, the complex Galilean theoretical apparatus emerges and we are shown how Galileo relies on Copernicus' contribution, modeling it wisely for the purpose of a scientific knowledge of the world as precise and complete as possible. De Pace's in-depth analysis not only makes us understand how Galileo reads Copernicus (which also highlights the significant influence that thinkers like Jacopo Mazzoni had on Galileo) but how the Copernican thesis was received and re-elaborated in the scientific community of the time. We are thus led to understand Galileo's gradual approach to Copernicus, eventually accepting the latter's scientific assumptions in the early 1590s. In a letter to Kepler of 7 August 1597, Galileo claims that he has started subscribing to Copernicus' position many years earlier, as only the Copernican model allows him to demonstrate the causes of many natural phenomena. For this reason, Galileo acknowledges Copernicus as the master of a new way of doing philosophy – an exception to the *perversa ratio philosophandi* of that time (pp. xxiii-xxiv).

De Pace's book is an authentic historical-philosophical 'anatomy' of Galileo's Copernican beliefs, a detailed itinerary whose extreme documentary rigor and richness allow us to overcome a number of age-old historiographical prejudices: Galileo before Copernicus, Galileo with Copernicus, Galileo beyond Copernicus. Steering clear of unilateral readings – or, even worse, interpretations disconnected from any real historical and documentary context – De Pace adopts a diachronic perspective that demystifies the interpretative aberrations responsible for a misleading narrative of Copernicus and Copernicanism in the history of modern thought. The felicitous outcome of De Pace's scholarly efforts is a sound reconstruction of the original context in which these thinkers and their works must be placed. Thanks to her balanced and subtle reinterpretation of the intimate plot of Galileo's writings (in particular his *Dialogo*) we can distinctly grasp the theoretical instruments that he used to penetrate the system set up by Copernicus. In the end, De Pace's reading of these texts shows that Galileo was not an uncritical reader and a passive receiver of Copernicus' arguments. On the contrary, his active reac-

tion to them reveals him to be both aware and critical of the limits and the shortcomings in Copernicus' *De revolutionibus*.

A short review like this cannot do justice to the vast scholarship and the critical depth of Anna De Pace's book. Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that this research provides an admirable historiographical lesson and an example of how to read complex cultural phenomena such as Copernicanism in the battlefield of modern science. We thus find it fair to say that *Galileo lettore di Copernico* makes a significant contribution to the knowledge of one of the most tormented and fascinating chapters in the history of Western thought.

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BRUNO BELHOSTE, 2019. *Paris Savant. Capital of Science in the Age of Enlightenment*, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, xx, 306 pp.

Published in the original French version in 2011, Bruno Belhoste's *Paris Savant* is now made available to the English-speaking public thanks to the efforts of Susan Emanuel (the translator) and Dena Goodman (the author of the foreword). *Paris Savant* is, first and foremost, "a history of Paris" (p. xvii). As the subtitle of the English edition suggests (*Capital of Science in the Age of Enlightenment*) the city of Paris is indeed at the core of Belhoste's narrative: the reader is taken through the streets of the old districts – from the Latin Quarter to the Île de la Cité and the Louvre – but also to visit manifold sites of scientific and technological practice, such as academies, schools, homes, laboratories, manufactures, etc. Belhoste's book is thus based on a sort of geographical approach to science history, which results in an exhaustive scientific atlas of eighteenth-century Paris.

*Paris Savant*, however, as the subtitle of the original French edition indicates – *Parcours et rencontres au temps des Lumières* – is also a history of "encounter and exchange" (p. xvii). The volume mentions a great number of historical figures – scientists but also noblemen, artisans, philosophers and printers – following their life trajectories to various extents. Special attention is devoted to the members of the Paris Academy – most notably Antoine Laurent Lavoisier – whose scientific networks and political connections Belhoste explains in detail. In this regard, what seems more interesting is Belhoste's broad reflections on the figure of the eighteenth-century savant (particularly the academician) *vis-à-vis* the emergence of a modern public sphere.

The first aspect is the mundane dimension of the activities of the savant. Although not as much neglected by commentators as Belhoste believes (p. 95), the participation of savants in societal and political dynamics, from the salons to the court, is a key aspect to understand the evolution of scientific practices in the *Ancien Régime*. While the analysis of the system of patronage shows in what ways