

an unfortunate arrangement. Still, this book is a very persuasive study packed full of relevant information about early Florentine printers and printing.

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On the Life of Galileo: Viviani's Historical Account and Other Early Biographies.
Stefano Gattei.

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How the astronomical discoveries of Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and his precipitous fall were judged in the half century after his condemnation by the Roman Inquisition is revealed in the biographical notices that Stefano Gattei has edited, translated, and annotated in this book. The main account of Galileo's life, and the most substantial of those included here, is Vincenzo Viviani's *Racconto storico* (*Historical Account*). Viviani lived with Galileo for over two years as his last student and amanuensis; after Galileo's death, he became his literary executor and indefatigable advocate. His hope was to lift the ban on his work and to provide him with a fitting monument, but he faced implacable opposition from Rome. To disarm this opposition, he claimed implausibly that Galileo, as a devout Catholic, had gratefully accepted the just correction of the Inquisition. Late in life, despairing of a proper monument, he embellished the facade of his palazzo in Florence with an account of Galileo's work, the text of which Gattei has also included here, along with Viviani's letter on Galileo's pendulum clock and his report on Galileo's last works.

Most of the other accounts are from collections of lives of artists, scientists, and other notables. Several of the authors—Girolamo Ghilini, Leo Allatius, and Vittorio Siri—discreetly omitted any mention of Galileo's downfall, probably because they all enjoyed or were seeking papal or Medici patronage. Galileo's son Vincenzo wrote a brief and affecting personal note, and although he did not mention the condemnation, he expressed the hope that his father's memory might be honored with an appropriate tomb. Some (Gian Vittorio Rossi, Lorenzo Crasso, and Isaac Bullart) castigated Galileo for his temerity in challenging the authority of the church and divine wisdom itself. Others were more sympathetic. Niccolò Gherardini, whose account is second only to Viviani's in length and detail, related how during the trial he had failed to persuade Galileo to heed the friendly warning of an unnamed member of the Holy Office about the evil intentions of another unnamed person of great authority. Gattei does not speculate on their identities: the first was probably Francesco Cardinal Barberini and the second his uncle, Pope Urban VIII himself. And Joachim von Sandrart fondly recalled how Galileo had shown him the moon and other wonders through his telescope from a window of the Medicean Palace, where Galileo was held



prisoner by the Inquisition. None of these accounts portrays him as the heroic champion of *libertas philosophandi* that he would later become.

In the appendix Gattei has added the 1620 poem *Adulatio perniciosa* (*Perilous flattery*, though “ruinous” might be better), in which Maffeo Cardinal Barberini—the future Pope Urban VIII—mentioned favorably Galileo’s telescopic discoveries. This is accompanied by an extensive account of Tommaso Campanella’s commentary on Urban’s poetry, which was perhaps unnecessary here given Gattei’s intention to publish it separately (297n47).

Many of these texts were printed by Antonio Favaro in the Edizione Nazionale of Galileo’s works, although none has been previously translated into English. Where possible Gattei has made critical editions, retaining all the original orthography (including, unnecessarily, the interchangeable use of *u* and *v*). The translations—from Italian, Latin, and French—are both accurate and idiomatic, with only rare lapses, notably: *valendosene* (proving its value) is translated as *exploiting it*, 4–5; *prestigiose* (marvellous) as *prestigious*, 16–17; *disparibus interuallis* (at unequal distances) as *with unequal [space] intervals*, 102–03; *nouatorum* (innovators) as *renovators*, 104–05; *scintillationes* (twinkling) as *gleaming*, 106–07; *giostra* (joust) as *carousel*, 110n3; *cognomine* (surname) as *household name*, 114–15; *vetri* (lenses) as *spectacles*, 122–23; *numero* (number) as *amount*, 168–69; *apparizioni* (reappearances—of the moons of Jupiter) as *apparitions*, 170–71; *assottigliando verso i lati estremi* (thinning it at the edges) as *sharpening it at the extremities*, 174–75; *sega* (saw) as *chainsaw*, 176–77—a note would help with this confusing description; *a vite* (by screwing) as *by twisting*, and *aggiustarlo* (to adjust it) as *to balance it*, 182–83; *momento* (static moment) as *momentum*, 228–29; *éclater au* (storming) as *bursting at*, 240–41; and finally, *mirabil congiuntura* (marvelous conjunction—the astronomical allusion was surely intentional) as *amazing circumstance*, 285.

Gattei’s annotations are extraordinarily thorough: every person, work, and event mentioned or alluded to is identified, explained at length, and illustrated with further documents and their translations. But sometimes he goes too far. A commonplace allusion in a letter prompted him to quote Homer—in the original Greek (78–79n109). The mention of Galileo’s last work, on Euclid’s definitions, elicited more Greek, where Campanus’s faulty Latin translation (which prompted Galileo’s work) would have been more apposite (87n162). A mention of celestial spheres provoked a lengthy history of Greek astronomy, where only Archimedes’s model of the heavens was meant (211n11). The book is illustrated by copies of manuscript and printed pages, photographs of Viviani’s palazzo and Galileo’s monument (finally allowed in 1737), and engraved portraits—of Galileo, to be sure, but why of all the other authors? There is an index of names.

This meticulous and thoroughly scholarly book should be on the desk of anyone wishing to trace the early career of Galileo’s reputation.

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