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galileo s pioneering use of the telescope showed that the earth is not at the center of the universe and led to his trial and conviction by the inquisition this first clash between science and religion still bedevils us today in many ways galileo however made an even greater contribution to history when in destroying medieval science and

discovering the laws of motion he established the procedure of modern science as a direct result of his work revelation and scripture as sources of truth are replaced by experimentation and measurement while tradition and authority as interpreters of truth are replaced by individualism and egalitarianism this tremendous alteration in the scientific process eventually swept through all non scientific disciplines and created the modern world a good case can therefore be made that galileo is the most influential person in history even if one does not agree with the conclusion tracing this dramatic change is one of the most exciting of intellectual adventures interesting argues well insightful and well written recommended choice march 2006 1246 however controversial manfred weidhorn s supporting thesis dovetails with a fruitful trend of extending the controversy on science and religion centered on galileo in a direction accounting for its impact on civilization not just for galileo s troubles with theologians and philosophers the person of the millennium insightfully identifies a paradigm shift of history with the galilean revolution generally meritorious work thought provoking and worthwhile reading perspectives on science and christian faith 59 2 june 2007 155 this is a very sweeping thesis involving grand theorizing in the style of the old philosophy of history however weidhorn s argument is nuanced and sophisticated whether or not one values this type of grand theorizing and whether or not one completely accepts the thesis weidhorn has constructed a supporting argument that is eloquent intelligent cogent and sometimes original and has written a well argued thoughtful and thought provoking book maurice a finocchiaro galileo scholar the historian 69 3 fall 2007 602

in 1633 the roman inquisition concluded the trial of galileo galilei with a condemnation for heresy the trial was itself the climax of a series of events which began two decades earlier in 1613 and included another series of inquisition proceedings in 1615 1616 besides marking the end of the controversy that defines the original episode the condemnation of 1633 also marks the beginning of another classic controversy about the galileo affair its causes its implications and its lessons about whether for example john milton was right when in the areopagitica he commented on his visit to galileo in florence by saying there it was that i found and visited the famous galileo grown old a prisoner to the inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the franciscan and dominican licensers thought i happen to be extremely interested in this second story and second controversy and a critical interpretation of the affair remains one of my ultimate goals but that is not the subject of the present work which is rather concerned

with something more fundamental namely with the documentation of the original episode to be more exact the aim of this book is to provide a documentary history of the series of developments which began in 1613 and culminated in 1633 with the trial and condemnation of galileo that is it aims to provide a collection of the essential texts and documents containing information about both the key events and the key issues the documents have been translated into english from the original languages primarily italian and partly latin they have been selected are arranged annotated introduced and otherwise edited with the following guiding principles in mind to make the book as self contained as possible and to minimize contentious interpretation and evaluation the galileo affair is such a controversial and important topic that one needs a sourcebook from which to learn firsthand about the events and the issues since no adequate volume of the kind exists this work attempts to fill the lacuna the originals of the documents translated and collected here can all be found in printed sources in fact with one exception they are all contained in the twenty volumes of the national edition of galileo s works edited by antonio favaro and first published in 1890 1909 the exception is the recently discovered anonymous complaint about the assayer whose original was discovered and first published in 1983 by pietro redondi this document is also contained in the critical edition of the inquisition proceedings edited by sergio m pagano and published in 1984 by the pontifical academy of sciences my selection was affected partly by the criterion of importance insofar as i chose documents that i felt to be more or less essential since i was also influenced by the double focus of this documentary history on events and issues i therefore included two types of documents the first consists of relatively short documents which are mostly either inquisition proceedings chapters v and ix or letters chapters i vii and viii and which primarily though not exclusively record various occurrences the second type consists of longer essays by galileo chapters ii ill iv and vi which discuss many of the central scientific and philosophical issues and have intrinsic importance independent of the affair finally my goal of maximizing the autonomy of this volume suggested another reason for including some of these longer informative essays on the scientific issues chapters iv and vi

when galileo lifted off from kennedy space center on 18 october 1989 it began an interplanetary voyage that took it to venus two asteroids back to earth and finally on to jupiter the craft s instruments studied jupiter s enormous magnetosphere and its belts of intense radiation the spacecraft also sent off a planetary probe that accomplished the

most difficult atmospheric entry ever attempted after this the craft spent years visiting jupiter s moons and delving into their structures and properties this book attempts to convey the creativity leadership and vision that were necessary for the mission s success it is a book about dedicated people and their scientific and engineering achievements the galileo mission faced many significant problems some of the most brilliant accomplishments and work arounds such as problems with the high gain antenna of the galileo staff occurred precisely when these challenges arose throughout the mission engineers and scientists found ways to keep the spacecraft operational from a distance of nearly half a billion miles enabling one of the most impressive voyages of scientific discovery

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