

*The Case of Galileo: a Closed Question?*, Annibale Fantoli, translated by George V. Coyne, S.J., University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2012, 271+ xii pages, \$28, 978-0-268-02891-6

Annibale Fantoli's *The Case of Galileo a Closed Question?* provides a shorter and more accessible version of the arguments presented in *Galileo: For Copernicanism and for the Church*, the English version of which was printed in 1994. While gone is most of the academic apparatus, the leaner version is just as careful in its consideration of the extant documentary evidence of Galileo's trial and condemnation as well as its aftermath. This well-translated volume is perhaps most notable for Fantoli's unmasking of apologetic interpretations of the Catholic Church's treatment of Galileo and Copernicanism.

Fantoli's account is thorough and suitable for those without specific expertise in the history of science. He begins with explanations of Ptolemaic and Aristotelian cosmology before launching into summaries of Galileo's early career and the initial controversies over the orthodoxy of heliocentrism. These initial chapters cover much that will be familiar to specialists, while laying the foundational knowledge necessary to understand the later censure and trial. Fantoli's comprehensiveness along with the clear prose of the translation make the first parts of the book ideal reading for preparing lectures on Galileo for undergraduates. The book's importance, however, goes beyond this pedagogical use, and is found in its judgment of the trial.

Fantoli manages to avoid major pitfalls in interpretations of Galileo's condemnation. Galileo is not pure hero. He is guilty of tactical errors during the trial, including falsely maintaining that the *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* intended to support Ptolemaic cosmology, admitting that he received a verbal injunction from the Jesuit Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino, and placing Urban VIII's arguments about the impossibility of knowing God in the mouth of the foolish character Simplicio. Yet the trial and the sentence, which Fantoli assesses as severe, were not the result of a misunderstanding on the part of Catholic authorities and Galileo or caused by Galileo's inability to satisfactorily prove the certainty of the Copernican system. Rather, Fantoli contends that papal "myopic authoritarianism" was the source of the condemnation, which, although juridically correct according to the legal standards of the time, was an abuse of power. This abuse of power emerged from an ecclesiastical inquisitorial system that used coercion and violence to control thought and the spread of ideas for centuries (pp. 210-11).

While it has become fashionable in some quarters to argue that science and religion are not at odds, the final chapter of this book demonstrates how hesitantly and incompletely the Catholic Church has addressed its condemnation of Galileo. In Fantoli's eyes, even the most recent efforts have failed to recognize blame for Galileo's condemnation. Fantoli documents the extreme slowness of the Catholic Church's reevaluation of this issue, which became a major embarrassment by the middle of the eighteenth century. Only in 1835, however, did the Catholic Church remove Galileo and his fellow supporters of Copernicanism from the Index of Prohibited Books. Eliminating Galileo from the Index did not resolve the question of the Catholic Church's culpability. In the 1940s the Catholic Church commissioned Monsignor Pio Paschini to write a history of the Galileo affair that would show that there was no persecution of Galileo.

When his work failed to satisfy the Holy Office, his history was first suppressed and then revised after his death in a manner that softened his judgment against the Church's dealing with Galileo. Fantoli criticizes more recent attempts of the Catholic Church, commissioned by John Paul II, to resolve the issue for not satisfactorily abandoning the apologetic vein. He treats particularly harshly Cardinal Poupard for his portrait of Bellarmino that attributes to him objectivity, while failing to note that Bellarmino and the Holy Office never adequately considered "scientific" reasons for condemning Copernicanism. Fantoli also accuses Cardinal Poupard of mischaracterizing the Galileo affair as a "disciplinary measure," ignoring that by placing all Copernicans on the Index in 1616, the Catholic Church formed theological and juridical doctrine regarding cosmology.

Fantoli's conclusion offers larger lessons. While the Inquisition no longer exists, the Catholic Church's intransigence on issues such as birth control, for which its official doctrine runs counter to the practices of millions who consider themselves to be Catholic, suggests, for Fantoli, that the Catholic Church must be in greater dialogue with "the whole of contemporary religious and secular thought" (p. 253) in order to avoid the same failings that it created in 1616 and 1633.

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