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Bucciantini, Massimo, Michele Camerota, and Franco Giudice. Galileo's Telescope: A European Story. Trans. Catherine Bolton

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localized within organic materials is explored by Christina Neilson in her offering entitled "Carving Life." As for inorganic materials, organic composite materials using wood are considered sacred by both artisan and devotee due to the resemblance of wood sculpture to material properties and the structure of the human body. Also researching in the area of composite organic materials, Elizabeth Semmelhack presents a fascinating look at fine footwear of the Spanish and Italian Renaissance period in her study of the precursor of the modern high heel: the fine leather *chopine*.

This publication is an admirable and highly original work due to its focus on materiality during the early modern period. The individual contributions present subtle and thought-provoking variations on the relation between materiality and phenomenal appearance in the form of either artwork or historical artifact. The textual evidence supporting the individual contributions also permits the reader to become more aware of the critical role that materials themselves play in cultural history. The endnotes offer a wealth of information for further research on the various topics presented. The fine illustrations throughout are reproduced in black-and-white, a choice that harmonizes well with the rich theoretical and speculative foundation of the publication.

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Bucciantini, Massimo, Michele Camerota, and Franco Giudice.
***Galileo's Telescope: A European Story.* Trans. Catherine Bolton.**
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015. Pp. x, 340 + 25 ill., 8 plates, 5 maps. ISBN 978-0-674-73691-7 (hardcover) $35.

The first pages of *Galileo's Telescope* describe a group of students pressed against a museum display case in Florence. While some students are uninterested in the case's contents—pieces of glass and wooden tubes—and move along, others stay behind, intent on unfolding the journeys of a museum artifact. *Galileo's Telescope* is best read as a guidebook for the latter; it takes readers unacquainted with the wooden tubes and pieces of glass across Europe and eloquently narrates the various encounters of the telescope.

Originally published in Italian in 2012, Massimo Bucciantini, Michele Camerota, and Franco Giudice's book presents a social history of the telescope. It retells a collection of familiar and unfamiliar stories about the telescope's production, perfection, and proliferation from 1608 to nearly a decade later. Each chapter keeps largely to its own geographical space, ranging from regions typically associated with the early telescope like the Netherlands, Venice, and Florence to those less so like France, Milan, India, and China. In taking readers across Europe and Asia, the authors aim to show that the history of the telescope follows not a linear path but a network of overlapping and intertwining narratives. The narratives come to life through a combination of expert storytelling—clearly reproduced by the translation work of Catherine Bolton—and insightful images throughout the book. For example, at the micro-level, readers gaze through the telescope alongside Galileo as he intermittently observes then draws each crater of the moon (69); at the macro, the authors provide convenient maps and chronologies of, say, the circulation of the *Sidereus nuncius* (112–13). Moreover, the sources under study in *Galileo's Telescope* are not merely published theories and responses to the instrument, or letters exchanged between Galileo and his correspondents. Instead, the authors' vast archival research allowed them to reference diverse sources—paintings by Brueghel the Elder and Cigoli, poems in lament or celebration of new discoveries, handwritten shopping lists on used envelopes—and to turn an already-international analysis into an interdisciplinary one as well.

Adopting such multifaceted perspectives, however, prevents Bucciantini, Camerota, and Giudice from providing thorough original insight into the early years of the telescope. Rightfully so, the authors express an aversion towards laying an interpretive framework overtop of their sources lest they misread or simplify a historical actor's decisions and actions (8–9); they would rather the sources dictate the history than historiography dictate the sources. But the consequence of the authors' ahistoriographical approach is that readers are given only a surface-level overview of a variety of historical episodes: a fight over patents in the Netherlands; a dispute involving Johannes Kepler at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor; a survey of Thomas Harriot and his circle of Copernican astronomers in England. Furthermore, rather than propose a specific argument concerning the development and reception of the telescope, the authors reiterate well-established conclusions: telescopic observations turned Aristotelian cosmology on its head; the *Sidereus nuncius* combined

visual arguments with written ones; leading political figures sought a telescope at court as much as scholars at universities. An especially problematic episode is the analysis of Galileo's May 1611 sojourn to Rome as a foreshadowing of his later conflicts with the Jesuits and the Roman Inquisition (208). By assuming that Galileo's life and work culminates in his conflict with the Catholic Church, Bucciantini, Camerota, and Giudice essentially commit the same anticipatory errors they set out to avoid.

The quality of the authors' analyses is also sometimes selective. In some instances, the authors interpret a particular citation in a qualified context and with supplementary evidence. In others, however, they either assume too much familiarity with the material on the reader's part or insist on their own interpretation as superior with minimal support. For example, the authors clarify the phrase "the friends of Berlinzone" as a reference to the Jesuits by Galileo's friend Sagredo (194), but give no mention of the significance of that particular Jesuit identification. That Sagredo called the Jesuits "the friends of Berlinzone" seems of little importance to the development of the authors' current argument and instead serves a descriptive function: it's simply a colourful quotation.

Despite some instances of light original analysis, *Galileo's Telescope* remains a highly accessible text and serves as a great foundation for further research into the earliest iterations of the telescope. The authors have brought to the forefront sources that are overlooked for their geographic displacement from the telescope's usual Florentine centre or for their apparent insignificance, as with letter envelopes. They have also shown the value of a methodology based in shifting locations: putting the numerous places of telescope use and reception in dialogue highlights the scale of the instrument's influence and details the mixed and changing attitudes towards it. All in all, *Galileo's Telescope* stands as a familiar yet stimulating survey of the eponymous wooden tubes and pieces of glass.

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