

THE AFTERMATH

One week after the trial Galileo's sentence of imprisonment was commuted to what we would now call "house arrest" for the rest of his days, first at his small villa at Arcetri near Florence, and later in Florence after he had lost his vision in 1637. The recitation of the penitential psalms was transferred, at his request, to Sister Maria Celeste, a Carmelite nun, who was Galileo's elder daughter.

Although forbidden to deal in any way again with Copernicanism, Galileo continued his scientific work in the remaining nine years of his life. He wrote another set of dialogues entitled *Discourses on Two New Sciences* (Leyden, 1638), which pulled together and perfected his ideas going back more than three decades on abstract topics in theoretical statics and dynamics. These writings were his most substantive contributions to physics in the long run, and in effect laid the groundwork for Newton's later theoretical justification of the Copernicanism which Galileo had been forbidden to discuss.

When Galileo died in 1642, the Duke of Tuscany requested permission to construct a tomb and monument in his honor in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence. But the request was denied by Urban VIII because Galileo had caused "the greatest scandal in Christendom." He was buried instead in the basement of the bell tower. Nearly one hundred years passed before his body was moved and interred with the intended honors in the church proper, where his remains lie today adjacent to two other famous local citizens, Michaelangelo and Machiavelli. Two hundred years had to pass before the condemnation of the *Dialogue* was removed.¹⁸ Two hundred and fifty years had to pass before the seal of secrecy was removed from the trial documents held in the Vatican Secret Archives.

If we step back now from the specifics of Galileo's trial and look at it as a whole, it is clear that some member(s) of the Holy Office, whose names remain unknown, sabotaged the plan for a plea bargain that was designed to bring the trial to a convenient close. Their misguided actions were probably motivated by a desire to serve the good of the church, although the results were overwhelmingly the opposite of that in the long run. Perhaps they still felt the shadow of the Reformation so strongly that they viewed Galileo as potentially another Luther.