

*Galileo Goes to Jail*. Edited by Ronald Numbers. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2009. 302 pages. \$27.95.

Most scholars who have worked in the field of the history of science or in the arena of science and religion know that Galileo never went to jail as such. We also know that the reasons for Galileo's confinement are likely very different from what many people think. All of this essentially captures the message in this volume edited by noted scholar Ronald Numbers.

In fact, Numbers has spent his career in many ways correcting false impressions of historical data. In this book he gathers together a set of equally well known scholars (scientists and religious scholars) to dismantle one by one the many myths that often have dominated thinking about religion and science even though they, like the myths about Galileo, are mostly false. Many of these short essays actually produce little new information to the well-read scholar, but they do effectively set out an agenda that may be helpfully used to inform students who are less informed.

Some of the essays do speak to matters of some considerable importance even if they are generally known. Seyd Haq's essay on Medieval Islam is an important corrective because the actual activity of Muslim scholars during that period was vital for the development of modern scientific studies. This story is often missing from talk about the emergence of modern science. In addition, the essay may correct a false impression of Islam in general—a matter certainly appropriate for our current climate. In addition, the essay connects well with the essay by Noah Efron regarding the role of Christianity in setting a context for the development of modern science. Surely we know by now that many factors were central to this development and that any answer to how science developed so clearly in Europe must be nuanced and complex.

Perhaps most useful for the classroom are the several essays dealing with the reception of Darwin, his ideas and beliefs and evolutionary theory. The issue of how our own culture knows and accepts evolution is important. Thus, Edward Larson's discussion of the Scopes trial is one essay that helps to set up the current discussion. It also is valuable to expand students' understanding of the extent to which forms of creationism can be found outside of the American setting, a matter nicely surveyed by Numbers himself. The essay by Michael Ruse addresses intelligent design and the clear problems with thinking of this idea in whatever form as a scientific position that in any way challenges evolution.

In the year of considering the contributions of Darwin, all of these essays can be celebrated as important statements even if they provide information that many already know. This book is an important new effort to put issues before the students in our classes and certainly deserves to be considered seriously as one text to use for the teaching of religion and science.

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