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(Great Discoveries)

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A cogent portrayal of a turning point in the evolution of the freedom of thought and the beginnings of modern science. Celebrated, controversial, condemned, Galileo Galilei is a seminal figure in the history of science. Both Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein credit him as the first modern scientist. His 1633 trial before the Holy Office of the Inquisition is the prime drama in the history of the conflict between science and religion.

Galileo was then sixty-nine years old and the most venerated scientist in Italy. Although subscribing to an anti-literalist view of the Bible, as per Saint Augustine, Galileo considered himself a believing Catholic.

Playing to his own strengths_a deep knowledge of Italy, a longstanding interest in Renaissance and Baroque lore_Dan Hofstadter explains this apparent paradox and limns this historic moment in the widest cultural context, portraying Galileo as both humanist and scientist, deeply versed in philosophy and poetry, on easy terms with musicians, writers, and painters. 19 b/w Illustrations