



Reenacting Galileo's Experiments: Rediscovering the Techniques of Seventeenth-Century Science

Paolo Palmieri, William R. Shea

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Most laymen know Galileo as a scientist whose theories defied those of his contemporaries in the Church. However, relatively few know much about those theories or methodology and the influence of both on modern science. Palmieri (history and philosophy of science, U. of Pittsburgh) provides significant insights into both theory and method, in part by explaining how Galileo was an experimental philosopher and within that context was both systematic and powerful. He explains Galileo's pendulum puzzles and their evolution into experiments in inclined planes and oscillating bodies that led to his discovery of fundamental laws of physics. Working from primary texts and fascinating computer models to replicate Galileo's experiments, Palmieri explains not only the underlying principles but also their connection to, for example, the further work of Baliani and others. The appendices, including an examination of the computer models and a translation of Galileo's notes on his experiments, are particularly interesting.

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