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As suggested by its title, the volume *Galileo and Spinoza*, special Issue of *Intellectual History Review* (23/1, March 2013), is entirely devoted to investigating possible points of contact between Galileo's and Spinoza's respective views on physics, metaphysics, and biblical exegesis. It includes nine articles, preceded by a short introduction by the guest editor, Filip Buyse. The editorial project clearly relies on the conviction that, despite never mentioning Galileo by name in his texts or letters, Spinoza must have been acquainted with the works and theories of the Italian scientist. Consequently, the main question addressed by the various contributors is the extent to which Galileo may have directly or indirectly influenced Spinoza's intellectual development.

In the first article, "Galileo and Spinoza: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives" (pp. 3-23), Franco Biasutti depicts a common historical and intellectual background. He observes that "in the course of his existence, Spinoza always lived in places where the figure of Galileo had left deep and presumably lasting traces, and where access to his works should not have been difficult" (p. 6). Even though this consideration is not sufficient to conclude that Spinoza directly studied Galileo's works, it makes it plausible that Spinoza had some knowledge of Galileo's theories.

In the second article, "Spinoza's Library: The Mathematical and Scientific Works" (pp. 25-43), Henri Krop, tries to track down traces of Galileo's thought in Spinoza's intellectual development, by means of an articulate analysis of the most recent version of the catalogue of Spinoza's library (*De boeken van Spinoza*, edited by T. Musschinga and J. van Sluis [Groningen: Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit Groningen and Haags Gemeentearchief, 2009]). First, he notices that no books by Galileo are listed among Spinoza's possessions. However, Krop argues, it is probable that Spinoza consulted works of Galileo found in the library of Christiaan Huygens. Krop concludes his analysis by affirming that Spinoza "was fully acquainted with the latest scientific developments of his time. Although he owned no books written by the Italian scientist, Spinoza's library at least in part betrayed a Galilean attitude towards science" (p. 43).

The third article is written by Filip Buyse, and it is entitled "Spinoza, Boyle, Galileo: Was Spinoza a Strict Mechanical Philosopher?" (pp. 45-64). The guest editor of the volume sets the boundaries within which Galileo's thought might have influenced Spinoza. "There is evidence," he writes, "that some of the most influential philosophers known to Spinoza had a more than an accidental relation with Galileo.

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[…] They absorbed his ideas, and were not only influenced by his revolutionary ideas on motion and his revolutionary astronomy but also by his doctrine of qualities. Famous examples are Hobbes, Descartes, and Huygens, not to mention Boyle himself" (p. 56). In particular, Buyse argues, Spinoza might have received and refined Galileo's distinction between the intrinsic and the extrinsic qualities of a body, through the mediation of Robert Boyle's theory concerning the distinction between primary and secondary affections.

In "Instruments and the Making of a Philosopher. Spinoza's Career in Optics" (p. 65-81), Rienk Vermij investigates Spinoza's activity as a lens polisher and instrument maker (microscopes and telescopes). In his "Galileo and Spinoza on the Continuity of Matter" (pp. 83-98), Epaminondas Vampoulis provides an original interpretation of Spinoza's scholium to Proposition 15, *Ethics* I, concerning the indivisibility of extension. The author of the article reads it as a reply and an "emendation" to Galileo's theory, who resorted to the properties of the geometrical continuum in order to explain the physical phenomenon of the cohesion between parts of matter. "When considered as a text attempting to associate the difficulties and the paradoxes of the infinite with the question of material nature," Vampoulis writes, "this Scholium […] may be counted among Spinoza's texts treating the metaphysical foundations of physical science and revealing a special interest in Galilean physics. To read this text as an answer to the theory of matter's continuity presented by Galileo in the *Discourses* and to the questions this theory leaves unanswered is a challenge that may lead to a better understanding of its argument" (p. 91).

According to Herman De Dijn, author of the sixth article of the volume ("Spinoza and Galileo: Nature and Transcendence," pp. 99-108), "Spinoza can be understood as the follower of Galileo who drew the ultimate consequences of the view that mathematical physics tells the truth about nature as obeying inexorable and immutable laws" (p. 100).

In "Spinoza, Critic of Galileo" (pp. 109-118), Pietro Redondi interestingly focuses on a passage found in the second chapter of Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*. Redondi reads Spinoza's exegesis of the so-called miracle of Joshua's long day in the Scriptures (Joshua 10:12-14) as a reaction to Galileo, who, in his *Letter to Christina*, provided an explanation of the same biblical passage as compatible with the heliocentric theory.

In addition to Galileo's and Spinoza's respective interpretations of Joshua's miracle, Tamar Rudavsky considers their exegetical approach to the miracle of the receding sun described in the Scripture (Isaiah 38:7-8). In his article "Galileo and Spinoza: The Science of Naturalizing Scripture" (pp. 119-139), he stresses the influence that Galileo may have exerted on Spinoza through the mediation of the works of Galileo's student, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591-1655).

Delmedigo is also the main object of the last article present in the volume, "Joseph Solomon Delmedigo: Student of Galileo, Teacher of Spinoza," by Jacob Adler (pp. 141-157). Adler goes as far as to argue that some of Delmedigo's theories, exposed in his *Sefer' Elim* (printed in 1629 by Spinoza's teacher at the Talmudic School, Menasseh Ben Isreal) might have directly inspired some of Spinoza's key-

theses, such as the identity of intellect and will and the distinction between different kinds of knowledge.

To conclude, the editor and authors of this special issue do well, overall, in accounting for Galileo as one of the possible sources of Spinoza's thought, without being overconfident about a direct influence of the former on the latter. They also shed light on the various ways in which Galileo's thought and theories may have permeated the intellectual environment within which Spinoza developed his own original philosophical system. As remarked above, however, given the absence of direct references to Galileo in Spinoza's works, some of the conclusions reached must be considered tentative. Yet, the variety of different perspectives assumed by the authors of the articles testifies to the fact that further research on the same topic is both possible, and possibly welcome.