Self-proclaimed Galileo’s ultimo discepolo, Vincenzio Viviani (1622-1703) strove all his life to become a renowned mathematician. Extolling the supposed purity of Euclid’s geometry, he sought to recover the lost knowledge of the Ancients, and fashioned himself a persona as the last heir of the Euclidean tradition. However, Viviani was not appointed primo matematico before 1666 and spent most of his life working as an engineer for the Tuscan Court, preventing him from devising his geometrical magnum opus as envisioned. Delving into Viviani’s personal archive conserved in Florence with his master’s papers, I will try and paint a different portrait from the one historiography retained.

‘Would that which we call a Galilean by another persona smell as historiographically sweet?’ Reflections on the many faces of Galileo, his work, and their legacies.

JB Shank – University of Minnesota – EUI Florence

In recent years, the touchstone works that have most influenced Galileo studies have come in the form of books with two-word titles that attempt to redefine the meaning of the label “Galileian.” Leaving aside Redondi’s Galileo, Heretic which started the trend in 1983, the real spark was lit a decade later with Biagioli’s Galileo, Courtier and all the many controversies it sparked, battles that were a major theater in the millennial “Science Wars” overall. A decade later, Bredkamp’s Galileo Der Kunstler added another Galileo to the mix, leading to more controversies of a very different sort. And then at the start of the previous decade just completed Valleriani gave us Galileo, Engineer, a work unlike the others that synthesized in clarifying ways a generation of previous scholarship. Who or what was the Galileo that these books now leave us with as historians? And what did it mean to be a Galileian if the label meant a legacy connected to heresy, courtliness, artistic practice, and engineering all at once, along with other Galileo’s (Galileo, Philosopher? Galileo, Theologian? Galileo Man of Letters?) that existed but have not yet had their book added to this same shelf? I have conceived of an approach to writing the biography of perhaps the Ur-Galileian, Evangelista Torricelli, that resolves this problem by situating Torricelli in terms the various early modern personae available to him. In my approach, his career is imagined through a study of his continuous navigation between these different seventeenth-century identities and the cultural relations between them. My paper will introduce this approach and elaborate its potential and problems as framework for Galileian studies as a whole.

Galileo’s legacy in Tuscany and the roots of the European scientific enterprise: The Accademia del Cimento in Florence.

Giulia Giannini – University of Milan

The Accademia del Cimento is the first European society to put experimentation at the core of scientific activity and to be supported by a public power. It lasted only ten years (1657-1667), the same years that saw the establishment of societies of greater fame and longevity such as the Royal Society and the Académie Royale des Sciences. The copious amount of records left by its members casts new light onto the process of establishment of scientific societies in Europe, on the emergence of a shared scientific discourse, and its normalisation. It also clarifies the “viral” aspect of some experiments as well as the dynamics of competition, imitation and (self-) censorship from which these institutional and scientific endeavours originated.
Borelli’s correspondence with the Royal Society
Antonio Clericuzio – University of Rome 3

In 1666 Oldenburg asked Henry Howard (who was then in Florence) to establish contacts between the Royal Society and some Italian virtuosi, including Michelangelo Ricci, Giovan Domenico Cassini, Manfredo Settala, Francesco Redi and Giovanni Alfonso Borelli (OC, letter 552). On May 18 1669 Oldenburg established direct contacts with Borelli, who in 1667 had settled in Messina after spending ten years in Tuscany. As news from the Etna eruption of 1669 reached the Royal Society, Oldenburg invited Borelli to “freely to impart whatever is of philosophical nature in Sicily...” After receiving Oldenburg’s letter, Borelli was contacted by Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici, who was eager to get information about the Etna eruption. Borelli did not fail to please his former patron so he sent Leopoldo a drawing of the fire in Catania, a good deal of information about the eruption, and some specimens of volcanic rocks and minerals, including details about the ejected material: “Veggia intanto V.A. le materie che sono uscite da tal voragine: le pietre nere sono la materia fluida cha a guisa di fiume... ha coperto vastissime campagne”. “Vicino alle bocche o aperture nuove si trovano queste altre materie salse, or sulfuree, la maggior parte delle quali par che sia sale ammoniaco, come V.A. potrà discernere dal sapore, e da altri segni...” (Ms. Gal. 278, fols 267-9)

The account Borelli sent to Leopoldo was a draft of the one he was writing for the Royal Society. Borelli was in fact eager to comply with Oldenburg’s request. In his answer to Oldenburg dated 14 July 1669 he stated that he decided to give a thorough account of the eruption and had planned “to survey the place diligently to make observations” (OC, letter 1243). He collected information from his Sicilian correspondents, notably from Francesco Antonio Arezzo, an aristocrat from Siracusa, who sent Borelli a long letter with a description of the eruption and with views about the chemical composition of lava. Borelli’s report turned into a book, bearing the title of Historia et meteornologia incendii Aetnaei anni 1669, printed in Reggio Calabria with the date of 1670, but it would seem that it saw the light at the beginning of 1671. Borelli sent his book to Oldenburg on 10 April 1671. Evidently, Borelli paid special attention to the dissemination of his work in England. It is likely that he was in competition with Malpighi who in 1668 was elected FRS. On April 10 1671 he sent Oldenburg 16 copies of his book on the Etna eruption for the fellows of the Royal Society, plus 14 copies for John Collins, the mathematician, with whom he corresponded in 1669 and 1670 on mathematics and mechanics. It is apparent that all copies of Borelli’s work on Etna were promptly delivered to Fellows of the Royal Society. On 14 November 1671 Oldenburg wrote to Martin Vogel that he could not comply with his request of a copy of Borelli’s book on Etna: “there is absolutely no copy of Borelli’s Incendium Aetnaei at my disposal.” (OC 1811 and 1822).

Christina’s man. Self-representation and multi-layered reality in Borelli’s last will.
Federica Favino – Marie Skłodowska Curie visiting scholar – Stanford University

The relations between science and politics in 17th-century Catholic Europe are yet to receive appropriate scholarly attention. There have been investigations of how ‘new philosophers’ dealt with political power at the level of individuals’ patronage dynamics, but the matter of individuals’ political identity and participation in political strife remains to be investigated and understood. That, with equally convincing arguments, historians have deemed the Academy of the Lyncean alternatively ‘pro-Spain’ and ‘pro-France’, makes for an exemplary case. This paper proposes to move forward the research agenda by taking advantage of the category of ‘factional conflict’. For 17th-century natural philosophers, did the stand against Aristotelianism represent a mere theoretical choice, a way of expressing political dissent or the collective position of the social groups to which they belonged? How did ‘new philosophy’ become a ground for debate among political factions in the struggle for resource control and interest representation? To what extent did the intellectual, social and politic networks of the ‘Galileans’ overlap?

The life and work of Giovanni Alfonso Borelli – a neotermo who was deeply engaged both in philosophy and in politics—offer rich material to address such questions, while digital social network analysis provides us with a powerful tool to reconstruct his multi-layered network of entangled and overlapping relationships. My paper presents the results of this methodology as it is applied to Borelli’s last-will, a document only recently recovered in Italian archives, testing the explorative approach that I have been developing at Stanford within the Horizon 2020 project Borelli Galaxy. This analysis reveals this archival document as a medium of public display for Borelli’s self-identity, portraying a complex reality, both personal and public.
At some point after the publication of his *Vain Speculation Undeceived by Sense* (1670), the Messinese artist Agostino Scilla painted a self-portrait. This talk explores his relationship to the world of the seventeenth-century Galileans between Messina and Rome, and his understanding of how to approach science in the age of the Cimento.