



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Department of Philosophy
and Cultural Heritage



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FARE
RICERCA IN ITALIA

FRAMEWORK PER L'ATTRAZIONE E IL RAFFORZAMENTO
DELLE ECCELLENZE PER LA RICERCA IN ITALIA

february 23rd, 2023

h. 4 p.m.

Aula Biral,

Malcanton-Marcorà

Organizers:

Max Planck Partner Group "The Water City" (Max
Planck Society / MPI for the History of Science -
Berlin)

ERC "EarlyModernCosmology" (Horizon 2020, GA
725883)

Project "EarlyGeoPraxis" (FARE, Italian Ministry of
University and Research)

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Image: Galileo with his telescope in the Piazza San
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Crisis and Change in Early Modernity:
Knowledge, Practice, Governance

Panel on Political Philosophy & Natural Sciences in Early Modernity

**Leviathan through the cannocchiale:
On the Galilean foundations of Hobbes'
later political thought**

Meghan Robison (Montclair)

**Paolo Sarpi between theoretical discussions
and empirical explanations. Epistemological
considerations on Della Podestà de' Prencipi
and Dominio del Mare Adriatico**

Erasmus Castellani (Duke)



Guest hosted by the ERC
EarlyModernCosmology GA 725883
and the FARE EarlyGeoPraxis
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Crisis and Change in Early Modernity:
Knowledge, Practice, Governance

**Panel on Political Philosophy &
Natural Sciences in Early Modernity**

Meghan Robison (Clairmont) &
Erasmus Castellani (Duke)

Leviathan through the cannocchiale: On the Galilean foundations of Hobbes' later political thought
Meghan Robison (Montclair)

In this talk, I offer an alternative way to think about Hobbes' relationship to Galilean science by reflecting on the new science as an emerging institutional power. After broadly outlining my claim that Hobbes understood that the authority of the new science springs from its embodied practical method, I will argue that Galilean science, both its conclusions and its empirical method, opened up the possibility for Hobbes' separation of "life" – an idiosyncratic, non-mechanistic kind of motion—from "nature"—mechanistic motion. The separation of non-mechanistic life from mechanistic nature had enormous consequences for Hobbes' political thought. In my presentation, I will reflect on some of the most important ones. In the first place, I argue, by beginning his explanation for the Commonwealth with a concept of life as a peculiar kind of embodied movement—a 'motion of limbs that comes from within'—Hobbes situates the human being in the natural mechanistically determined world as a uniquely dynamic self-moving body who is able to come together with others and freely establish a law-governed collective way of life: a Commonwealth.

Paolo Sarpi between theoretical discussions and empirical explanations. Epistemological considerations on Della Podestà de' Principi and Dominio del Mare Adriatico
Erasmus Castellani (Duke)

I would like to make some considerations of two lesser known works of Paolo Sarpi: Della potestà dei Principi and the Dominio del Mare Adriatico. While both treatises revolve around questions of sovereignty, my focus is on Sarpi's methodology and philosophical approach. His philosophy adopted a mechanical model, in which all phenomena needed to be analyzed only in relationships of cause and effect. Unlike other historians like Machiavelli, who limited their historical analysis to the observation of facts and their concatenation in the flux of history—a flux that is regulated by unintelligible laws—Sarpi's approach was more "scientific" in the sense that the analysis of historical facts was the starting point to develop hypothetical (although contingent) models by which one could reinterpret human events. In my paper, I try to exemplify this approach and argue that Sarpi shaped it according to his audience, the pragmatic patricians who ruled the Venetian Republic: men whose appreciation for direct and empirical explanations far exceed their interest in theoretical discussions.



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