FILIPPO SALVIATI: A BAROQUE VIRTUOSO

MARIO BIAGIOLI
University of California, Los Angeles

RIASSUNTO

Si presentano nuove indicazioni documentarie a proposito della biografia di Filippo Salviati. Si mostra che, contrariamente a quanto creduto, la partenza di Filippo da Firenze nel 1613 non fu conseguenza di dispute a corte. La seconda parte dell’articolo discute una possibile relazione tra la cultura patrizia di Filippo e il suo sostegno alla scienza di Galileo.

Antonio Favaro’s Amici e Corrispondenti di Galileo is still the best source for reconstructing the networks of Galileo’s personal and intellectual contacts.¹ However that work is paradoxically silent on one of Galileo’s closest associates: Filippo Salviati. The little information available on this young Florentine patrician that Galileo turned into the mathematical hero of the Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems and Discourse on the Two New Sciences came from the few letters included in Galileo correspondence and from the funeral oration Niccolò Arrighetti delivered to the Accademia della Crusca – a Medici-sponsored literary academy to which Filippo belonged.² Even the information collected by Prince Federico Cesi to serve as the basis for a biography of the deceased Lincean he had

² Niccolò Arrighetti, Delle lodi del Sig. Filippo Salviati, Florence, Giunti, 1614.
commissioned to Justus Riquius does not contain any additional information but seem to rely entirely on Arrighetti’s oration.\(^3\)

What follows here is by no means a new biography of Salviati. Rather, I want to present a few addenda to Arrighetti’s work that have emerged from a perusal of documents from the Medici court now preserved in Florence’s Archivio di Stato and from sources available in the Archivio Salviati recently relocated to the Scuola Normale Superiore at Pisa.\(^4\) Then, moving from this new information and relying on recent works by Hurtubise on the history of the Salviati family and by Litchfield on the social history of the Florentine patriciate, I will try to reconstruct the development of Filippo’s social role and suggest some connection between his social identity and culture and his interest in Galileo’s science.\(^5\)

Filippo was born on 19 January 1582 to one of the most distinguished and politically influential Florentine families since the thirteenth century, one that produced four cardinals – one of them during Filippo’s life. A branch of the family moved to Rome during the sixteenth century where it quickly established itself in the Roman aristocracy and court society,\(^6\) Isabella Salviati, the second wife of the founder of the Accademia dei Lincei, Prince Federico Cesi, belonged to this branch, being the daughter of Lorenzo Salviati, Marquis of Giuliano.\(^7\) The Florentine branch of the family was equally distinguished and politically influential. After a period of tension during the Medici’s eventually successful attempt to turn Florence into a Duchy in the first half of the sixteenth century, the political ties between the Salviati and the Medici became very close. That Cosimo de’ Medici – the first Grand Duke of Tuscany – was born of a Salviati helped strengthening the political ties between the two families. A Venetian ambassador to Florence during the reign of

\(^1\) Biblioteca Corsiniana e dell’Accademia dei Lincei, Roma, «Archivio Linceo 4», ff. 310-312.

\(^2\) Information concerning Filippo can be found in Archivio Salviati, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa, «Libri di commercio e di amministrazione patrimoniale, serie II, nos. 119-133. Numbers 127-133 cover the 1610-1614 period. Most of the documents concern personal finances and bookkeeping of his farms. I have not been able to find any letters or personal diaries of his.


\(^4\) HURTUBISE, Une famille-témoin, pp. 233-266.

\(^5\) Ibid., p. 499.
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Francesco – the second Grand Duke of Tuscany – observed that Giacomo Salviati (whom he called a «kinsman» of the Grand Duke) was one of his closest political advisors. The close ties between the Medici and the Salviati were later expressed by the routine appointments of members of the Salviati family to very prestigious court posts.

For example, the Marquis Lorenzo Salviati (Cesi's future father-in-law) was the Medici ambassador to Rome in 1609, while Filippo's cousin Vincenzo (who would become Governor of Siena and then Marquis of Montieri in 1621) was sent on a diplomatic tour through England, Lorraine, Bayern, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. The close connections between Medici and Salviati were also played out in the court ceremonies. For instance, when the Grand Duke Ferdinand I died in 1609, the Salviati took the coffin from the gates of the court palace to the Duomo. Also, Vincenzo Salviati (Filippo's cousin) was designated as the leader of the ceremonial horseride after the baptism of princess Maria Cristina in 1613 and that of princess Anna in 1617. When cardinal Carlo de' Medici went to Rome in the spring of 1616 to pick the cardinal's hat, Vincenzo Salviati accompanied him. By 1628, Vincenzo was the Maggioromo Maggiore, the court's most powerful post. Before then, he had been Consigliere di Stato – a member of the regency that rule the Grand Duchy between the death of Cosimo II in 1621 and the majority of Ferdinando II in 1628. When princess Caterina de' Medici married Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga in 1617, Filippo's uncle and Vincenzo's father, Antonio Salviati, was chosen as one of the warrants for the payment of the dowry.

8 Litchfield, Emergence of a Bureaucracy, p. 88.
9 Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF from now on), «Manoscritti 320», p. 437. To this initial feud, the Salviati were able to add the little marquisate of Boccheggiano in 1637.
10 ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 9.
11 Ibid., f. 5r.
12 «A guidare la cavalcata furono destinati Piero Guicciardini e Vincenzo Salviati, soggetti molto pratici e principali», ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 50v. For the 1616 baptism, ibid., f. 350. He repeated himself in the carnival horseride of 1612, ibid. f. 104v. Also, Vincenzo Salviati was among the leaders of the horseride that opened the court festivities of the carnival of 1613 (ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 122r).
13 ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 291. The same Vincenzo offered a reception that fall when the prince of Urbino, Federigo visited Florence, ibid., f. 330r. For Lorenzo Salviati's activity as ambassadors, see ASF, «Manoscritti 320», p. 651.
14 ASF, «Miscellanea Medicea 33, inserto 3», f. 1, f. 9r. Since this date, the post of Maggioromo Maggiore became «controlled» by the Salviati family.
15 ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 362r.
This list (one that could be easily extended) should suggest how pervasive and conspicuous was the presence of some of the Salvatiis at the Medici court. Because of this pattern, it is striking that references to Filippo’s father Averardo or to Filippo himself in court diaries or documents are very rare.\(^\text{16}\) True, there is a Filippo Salvati in the 1602 and 1610 ruoli of court gentlemen and among those in the entourage that sailed with the Queen Maria from Livorno to Marseille and then to Paris, but this Filippo (who then became Proposto of Prato and ended his career as Bishop of Borgo San Sepolcro\(^\text{17}\)) turns out to be son of Marquis Antonio and therefore the brother of Vincenzo and the cousin of our Filippo.\(^\text{18}\)

Filippo’s unconspicuous role in Florentine courtly life may be related to two factors. First of all, Averardo, his father, died in 1595 when Filippo was only thirteen – an age by which Filippo could have been hardly already connected to court circles. Moreover, Filippo had one sister, Lisabetta (who married Bernardo Capponi) but no older brothers who could help him connect with court network and teamed with him in court politics. This handicap of Filippo’s becomes more evident when we look at the careers of his cousins. In fact, two of the sons of Filippo’s uncle Antonio were quickly placed by their father in strategic posts within the Medici court and administration. Also, at Averardo’s death, Antonio became Filippo’s tutor and it could be that he did not support Filippo’s court career as strongly as he did with his two sons Vincenzo and Filippo.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^{16}\) Beside the few letters to Filippo or documents mentioning him reproduced below, I have found only one letter of his in the court correspondence. It is dated 8 October 1610 from Le Selve and is addressed to the Grand Duke and contains a recommendation on behalf of a court gentleman (ASF, Mediceo del Principato 968, f. 222v).

\(^{17}\) He is listed as Proposto of Prato in the court ruolo of 1610, ASF, Depositeria Generale 389, f. 82r. According to Favaro, he was Proposto since 1605 (Galileo Galilei, Opera, Antonio Favaro (ed.), Firenze, Barbera, 1890-1909 (GO from now on), Vol. XX, p. 394, in the paragraph titled «Bocchineri Carlo»).

\(^{18}\) ASF, Depositeria Generale 389, in a entry dating around January 1602 at f. 58v we find «Signor Filippo Salvati del Signor Antonio Salvati in ruolo senza provvisione per godere li privilegi del Ruolo...». Similar information is also recorded at a later date in ASF, Guardaroba Mediceo 301, f. 43r where Filippo di Antonio is listed among the «non provisionati». That Filippo was in the entourage of Maria de’ Medici on her way to Paris is documented in ASF, Carte Strozziiane I, 27, f. 49v where Filippo is reported as being on the galea «San Sebastiano» sailing from Livorno to Marseille on 21 October 1600.

\(^{19}\) Antonio Salvati is presented as mentor of Filippo in Archivio Salvati, Serie II, 120a. Arrighetti, at p. 11 of his Delle lodi..., says that Filippo married Ortensia Guadagni «secondando i gran pari gli avveduti consigli del Sig. Antonio suo zio...». It is interesting to see that Antonio’s second wife was Cassandra Guadagni. Putting this together with Arrighetti’s remark that Filippo’s marriage to Ortensia Guadagni was encouraged by Antonio, it may be that the uncle arranged for the marriage of his tutored nephew as part of the family’s marriage strategies – strategies that he probably defined.
In fact, unlike his younger cousin Vincenzo, Filippo never gained an aristocratic title - rewards that the Medici began to distribute quite generously among their courtiers during the first half of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{20} In this regard is interesting that Filippo’s wife, Ortensia Guadagni, managed to become Marquess of San Lolino del Conte in 1645 not through the political influence of Filippo (who had died thirty-one years before) but through the patronage of Vittoria della Rovere, the Grand Duchess wife of Ferdinando II.\textsuperscript{21} At her death in 1659, Ortensia’s title and the feud was kept by the Guadagni family. What is interesting is not only that Ortensia’s connection to the court was stronger than that of Filippo, but that she started her courtly career well after Filippo’s death. In the description of the wedding of Ferdinando II and Vittoria della Rovere, princess of Urbino in 1634, we find that it was Ortensia (described as Vittoria’s Camera Maggiore) to place the grand ducal crown on Ferdinando’s head.\textsuperscript{22} Galileo must have noticed Ortensia’s career if he relied on her services as a broker at the Medici court since 1636.\textsuperscript{23} However, this does not mean that Filippo was foreign to the Medici court or that he kept a low profile in Florentine life, but only that his participation to court life seems to have been during ceremonies rather than through influential political posts. His own wedding with Ortensia Guadagni in 1602 was a court event. In a court diary we find that on 5 September 1602:

Il Sig. Filippo Salviati havendo preso per moglie la signora Hortenzia Guadagni fece in casa sua nella via del Palagio un bel banchetto, ove intervennero Don Virginio Orsino, la Duchessa di Bracciano sua moglie, Don Antonio [de’ Medici]. Al festino di ballo vi fu Madama [the Grand Duchess Cristina]. Vi fu il Serenissimo [the Grand Duke] col Cardinal dal Monte e dopo si diede una nobile colazione.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{20} Averardo’s only title was that of senatore, and honorific title usually given to all patricians and also to a good number of upper bourgeois, ASF, «Manoscritti 320», p. 79. Averardo became senatore in 1588, Filippo never gained that title. On the increasingly sale of aristocratic titles in this period see LITCHFIELD, Emergence of a Bureaucracy, pp. 34-36.

\textsuperscript{21} ASF, «Manoscritti 320», p. 509. The title was given to her on July 21. It then passed on to her brother. Ortensia died in 1659.

\textsuperscript{22} FERDINANDO BALDI, Descrizione delle feste fatte in Firenze per le Reali Nozze de’ Serenissimi sposi Ferdinando II Gran Duca di Toscana e Vittoria Principessa d’Urbino, Florence, 1634, p. 18.


\textsuperscript{24} ASF, «Diari di Etichetta di Guardaroba 4», (1600-1608), f. 27r.
The celebrations did not end there if, three weeks later, on September 28, the same diary reports that:

Il Sig. [Gran] Duca con Madama e con due cardinali e senza la corte andarono nella via del Palagio a casa di Filippo Salviati che essendo sposo faceva festino di ballo.\(^{25}\)

The much less festive ritual that, twelve years later, marked the end of Filippo’s life was comparably conspicuous in spite of his expressed desire to keep the funeral celebrations to a minimum. The 15 May 1614 entry of a Florentine diary records that on that Thursday:

Per la Porta a S. Friano a mezza ora di notte il Sig. Filippo d’Averardo Salviati che in età di anni 30 [sic] era morto a Barzella di Spagna il di 25 di Marzo 1614, con dello primo ordine andò la Croce di San Marco con tutta la regola de’ suoi frati, e la Parrocchia di S. Pagolo e la Compagnia del Gesù con no. 90 torce bianche. Dispiacque la sua morte a tutta la città perché era giovane di grande aspettazione.\(^{26}\)

These fragments and the little remaining available documentation of Filippo’s interaction with the life of the Medici court and of the city supports the picture of his personality given in Arrighetti’s funeral oration. Filippo was not a court politician but a virtuoso. He was somebody who, because of the status of his family, had free access to the court and its life, but also somebody who did not have a specific post there. Differently from his close relatives who were often cited in court documents for the political and diplomatic roles they had, Filippo is remembered for his conspicuous wedding and funeral celebrations and for his participation in courtly spectacles. For instance, according to Arrighetti,

Non compari mai ne in danza, ne in torneo, ne in giostra, ne in altro pubblico spettacolo, che le sue comparse non fossero prima ammirate per la magnificenza, e lodate per la gentilezza di cavaliere. Non fu mai veduto in servizio pubblico de’ suoi Principi, che le sue livree, i suoi cavalli, i suoi guernimenti prima non fusser lodati, e come di gran personaggio: e appresso riveriti.\(^{27}\)

He was also famous for his generosity and tendency toward

\(^{25}\) Ibid., f. 29v.

\(^{26}\) ASF, «Manoscritti 132», f. 187v. The date of Filippo’s death recorded in this document is slightly different from that given by Favaro (25 March), GO, Vol. XX, p. 530.

\(^{27}\) ARRIGHETTI, Delle lodi, pp. 8-9. See also pp. 7, 11, 18-19, 21-22, 24-25, 26-27.
conspicuous expenditure, and for his somewhat anachronistic knightly ethos. Not only did Filippo routinely offer economic support to cavalieri facing financial difficulties, but, in 1613, he went so far as to offer the Grand Duke Cosimo II (who was then engaged in the war of Monferrato) a cavalry squadron that he planned to enroll at his own expenses. Although Arrighetti presented this offer (one that the Grand Duke did not accept) as an example of Filippo’s unusual generosity and loyalty to the Medici, he also indicated that in this case Filippo’s behavior resembled less that of the privato gentiluomo he was and more that of a gran Principe. Evidently, the pride of being a Salviati was very close to the surface of Filippo’s identity.

This curious event does not only fit well the sketch of Filippo’s aristocratic personality presented by Arrighetti, but it also resonates well with what we know about the rapidly changing social identity of the Florentine patriciate of the late sixteenth century. As shown by Litchfield, the Florentine patricians rich enough to be able to survive the very expensive lifestyle dictated by the court, underwent a rapid and quite conspicuous metamorphosis from merchant patriciate to court aristocracy. Filippo’s knightly ethos and his near-fixation with horsemanship is a close reflection of these recently adopted values. The precedence dispute that took place at the Medici court between Filippo and Bernardetto de’ Medici that has previously (but incorrectly) related to Filippo’s departure from Florence (a trip that would end with his premature death) may be also seen as the result of the obsession with issues of status typical of baroque court society.

The etiquette dispute between Filippo and Bernardetto de’ Medici (one that Filippo lost) must have been a serious one if it appears in the official correspondence of the Grand Duchess Cristina. On 22 June 1609, she responded to a letter by Cardinal Bandini in Rome by claiming that:

Io sono stata sempre naturalmente inclinata a procurar la quiete et la pace tra ogn’uno, massimamente fra persone di qualità et di merito, et intorno alle differenze che son nate, tra il Signor Don Bernardetto Medici, et il Signor Filippo Salviati V.S. Illustrissima può credere che io habbia fatto, et sia per fare tutti quelli offitii che potranno dependere da me per l'accomodamento di esse, portando io una buona volontà all'uno et all'altro di loro.

28 ARRIGHETTI, Delle lodi, pp. 16, 24-27.
29 Ibid., pp. 18-19.
Si che in questa parte la raccomandazione di V.S. IllustriSSima non era punto necessaria, sendo che in tutte le cose m’impieghero sempre ed maggior efficacia, quando io sappia che ci sia interessato il gusto, et la sodisfattione di V.S. IllustriSSima desiderando io grandemente di servirla, et le bacio la mano. 30

The following day, Cristina sent a very similar response to letter by the other Florentine cardinal in Rome, Maffeo Barberini – the future Pope Urban VIII:

Subito che segui la differenza fra il Signor Don Bernardetto Medici, et il Signor Filippo Salviati, io procurai di fare all’ora tutto quello che fu possibile, acciò che il fatto non avesse da passare più avanti, et si potesse brevemente accomodare, ma il negozio si rese più difficile per la partita improvvisa del medesimo Don Bernardetto. Hora V.S. IllustriSSima si può permettere che io seguiro nell’istesso proposito, et che il Gran Duca similmente non haverà bisogno di incitamento per questa buona opera, et oltre a quello che io farei spontaneamente, mi ci riscalderà ancora molto di più, per il senso che ne mostra V.S. IllustriSSima alla quale io desidero di servire in ogni conto, et le bacio la mano. 31

That Filippo (or those who watched the dispute) managed to mobilize two cardinals so that they would put pressure on the Medici to resolve the incident is telling of both the status of the Salviati family and of the severity of the dispute. 32 More importantly, these letters demonstrate that this dispute that has routinely been linked to Filippo’s departure from Florence at the end of 1613 took place much earlier than previously assumed and that, therefore, was not the cause of Filippo’s final trip. 33

Probably because of the absence of Bernardetto from Florence mentioned by Cristina, and possibly also because of Filippo’s bruised ego, the incident remained unresolved for a very long time. However, unlike what has been previously believed, the dispute was

30 ASF, «Mediceo Principato 6038» («Registro di lettere di Madama da’ 12 Luglio 1608 fino a 20 di giugno 1611»), f. 48v. I have not been able to locate Cardinal Bandini’s letter within the incoming correspondence of Cristina.

31 ASF, «Mediceo Principato 6038», f. 48v. I have not been able to locate Cardinal Barberini’s letter within the incoming correspondence of Cristina.

32 My guess is that the Florentine Salviati may have lobbied the Florentine cardinals (that is, those with strong ties with the Medici) through Cardinal Salviati – a member of the Roman branch of the family.

33 The standard interpretation of the causes of Filippo’s departure can be found in GO, Vol. XX, p. 530. Filippo left Florence in the Fall of 1613.
eventually settled almost four years after the event. A court diary reports that on 2 January 1613:

In Camera del G. Duca e alla sua presenza si fece la pace fra D. Bernadetto de Medici presente (comparsoci ancora con procura D. Ottaviano suo fratello assente) da una parte e il Sig. Filippo Salviati all'altra. Parlò il Cavaliere Vinta primo segreterio di Stato. Trattò l'aggiustamento il Sig. Francesco dal Monte soprintendente della Fanteria. 34

The settlement came during a particularly intense and satisfying period in Filippo's intellectual and social life. In January 1613 Galileo's Letters on Sunspots (published by the Lincei in Rome and dedicated to Filippo himself) were being printed and Galileo was at Le Selve (when he had written most of them) doing his best to monitor the publication from a distance. 35 Then, only a few months before he had been elected to Rome's Accademia dei Lincei and had seen the publication of Galileo's Discourse on Bodies in Water, a text he wrote in response to a debate which had originated pat Salviati's in the summer of 1611.

Consequently, it is very unlikely that the trip through Europe that Filippo initiated at the end of that year had much to do with the dispute. If there is a sense in which the two events were related, it may be found in that Filippo had finally set his accounts with the court and could leave for what he assumed would be a pleasurable gran tour. Therefore, when he died of a sudden illness in Barcellona in the spring of 1614, Filippo was not running away from Florence. Rather, he was doing something that any wealthy, children-less and

34 ASF, «Miscellanea Medicea 435», f. 96. Favaro thinks that the Bernadetto de' Medici who had an etiquette conflict with Filippo was the nephew of Leo XI. This Don Bernadetto (who was the brother rather than the nephew of the short-lived Pope Leo XI) is known to have left Florence for Naples in 1567 as a result of increasing tensions with Cosimo I. In Naples, Bernadetto bought the feud of Ottaiano from Prince Gonzaga and started the branch of the Medici family that would later be known as «Principi di Ottaiano». Therefore, it is very unlikely that this Bernardetto was in Florence in the summer of 1609. In any case, if it was he who had a dispute with Filippo, by being a Medici, a Prince of Ottaiano, and the husband of Giulia de' Medici (the daughter of Alessandro, the first duke of Florence), he would have certainly had precedence over Filippo. Moreover, the document reproduced here indicates that Don Bernardetto had a brother, Don Ottaviano. The siblings of the Bernadetto mentioned by Favaro were, instead, Alessandro and Contessa. The genealogical sources I have consulted do not show any Medici brothers named Ottaviano and Bernadetto in this period (E. Grassellini, A. Fracassini, Profili Medici, Florence, Libreria SP44, 1982). Therefore, it is quite likely that this Bernadetto was a member of a quite minor branch of the Medici family. This would also justify Filippo's rage at having to give precedence to such an unimportant member of the Medici family.

culturally sophisticated patrician unconcerned with court politics would do: travel.

In fact, as indicated earlier, Filippo was less concerned with the political dimensions of court life than with its ceremonial and spectacular aspects. In this, he was more like Giovanfrancesco Sagredo – the Venetian co-star of the Dialogue and Discourse – than his own cousin Vincenzo or uncle Antonio. Whether Filippo’s somewhat dismissive attitude about court life was a result of a conscious choice or whether it was the result of the contingencies of his upbringing, Filippo behaved as an aristocrat who did not want or need to engage in the nitty-gritty aspects of the courtly game.

This identity was reflected also by his restructuring of the suburban Villa delle Selve into a small court palace served by a familia of about twenty-three, secured by a small militia of four soldiers (keep in mind that Filippo’s family was constituted only by himself and his wife Ortensia), and often populated by Galileo and by a sizable group of virtuosi friends.36 As we know from Galileo, Filippo did not spend his time at court but would go to pay homage to the Grand Duke in Florence, Pisa, or Livorno only when the occasion and his rank required it.37

In trying to adopt the lifestyle of a landed aristocrat, Filippo was following a common trend of the period – one associated to the so-called «refeudalization».38 As we mentioned, this period saw a number of wealthy Florentine patricians seeking the aristocratic

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36 Filippo’s expansion and restructuring of the Villa delle Selve is described in «Villa le Selve», in EWA KARWACKA CODINI and MILLETTA SBRILLI, Archivio Salviati - Documenti sui beni immobiliari dei Salviati: palazzi, ville, feudi, piante del territorio, Pisa, Scuola Normale Superiore, 1987, pp. 75-80. In 1609, Filippo had a familia oscillating between 22 and 24 people, and 3 or four soldiers, Archivio Salviati, «Libri di commercio e di amministrazione patrimoniale, serie II, 129», (Quadernuccio di cassa e ricordanze di Filippo di Averardo Salviati, 1609-1614), f. 2r, f. 3r, f. 6v. On Galileo’s presence at Le Selve, see EWA KARWACKA CODINI and MILLETTA SBRILLI, Archivio Salviati-Documenti sui beni immobiliari dei Salviati: palazzi, ville, feudi, piante del territorio, and MARIO BIAGIOLI, «New Documents on Galileo», Nuncius, 6, f. 1, (1992), 157-169. That Galileo was not Filippo’s sole guest can be deduced from Filippo’s letter to Galileo in Florence, pressuring him to return to Le Selve in order to discuss Ruzante «con gli amici» (GO, vol. X, n. 668, p. 290).

37 Judging from Galileo’s correspondence, from the beginning of 1611 to Filippo’s departure at the end 1613, Galileo spend more time at Le Selve than in Florence or at court. Given the existence of some correspondence between Filippo at Le Selve and Galileo in Florence, it seems that Filippo visited the court even less frequently than Galileo. For a reconstruction of the pattern of residence of Galileo in this period see MARIO BIAGIOLI, «Anatomy of a Court Dispute», Chapter 3 of Galileo Courtier, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993).

38 PANSINI G., «Per una storia del feudalesimo nel granducato di Toscana durante il periodo Mediceo», Quaderni Storici, 19 (1972), 131-86.
status by land ownership, titles, and by conspicuous building projects. In fact, the Salviatis pursued the transition from merchant patriciate to court aristocracy most aggressively during Filippo’s life. They had began to shed their mercantile origins and adopt a more courtly identity at least since the 1560s and the process became much more conspicuous at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The Roman branch of the family (headed by Cesi’s future father-in-law Lorenzo) started the trend by becoming marquises and then dukes of Giuliano in, respectively, 1603 and 1627. While Filippo’s father Averardo seemed still quite tied to the mercantile ethos of the family, Filippo’s uncle and tutor Antonio followed the trend set by the Roman branch. In 1608 (when Filippo was twenty-six), the Florentine branch (now headed by his uncle Antonio) closed its wollen manufacture company – an establishment that had been the family’s flagship since the end of the fourteenth century. By 1622, they also closed the silk company they had founded at the end of the fifteenth century. In 1639, after Vincenzo Salviati and his son had obtained aristocratic titles, they went so far into effacing their commercial background as to erase their name (but not their partnership) from their bank. However, these moves were not exclusively driven by the logic of image. After 1600, the Florentine economy had declined so sharply that a switch from industry to real estate investments became financially appealing.

Filippo’s was literally caught in the middle of this transition of social role and identity and his life path both conformed with and deviated from the pattern followed by his relatives. Not only did he avoid a court career, but, unlike most other Florentine patricians, Filippo developed a distinctive cultural orientation: he became an enthusiastic supporter and practitioner of Galilean science. What I want to do in the remaining few paragraphs is to sketch a very preliminary sociological analysis of some of the factors in Filippo’s apparent deviation from the culture typical of his social group.

As we have seen, Filippo – probably because of the early death of his father – did not connect with court politics but became (or

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39 On the transformation of the Florentine patriciate into a court aristocracy, see Litchfield, Emergence of a Bureaucracy, pp. 24-51.
40 HURTUBISE, Une famille-seven, p. 367.
41 Ibid., p. 366.
42 Ibid., p. 367.
43 Ibid., pp. 368-369.
remained) something of a «de luxe marginal». This biographical accident (together with the very high status and wealth of his family and the identity crisis of the Florentine patriciate), helped him develop the identity of an extreme type of court virtuoso, one that practices *sprezzatura*, conspicuous expenditure, and dismissal of practical concerns to the point of reaching isolation. I would suggest that Filippo’s marginalization may have been both the result and the cause of his aristocratic pride. In this, Filippo’s behavior was not unlike that of at least two other major figures of the scientific revolution: Tycho Brahe and Federico Cesi. In all these cases we have people who considered the court as a «market place» were people were seeking and negotiating privileges in ways that were unacceptable to their aristocratic ethos.\(^44\)

In Filippo’s case, this «identity crisis» triggered both by his biographical contingencies and by the general reshaping of the social role of the Florentine patricians in connection to the emergence of court society, led him, at least at first, to adopt a quite anachronistic knightly ethos. However, an important change took place in Filippo’s cultural orientations and identity well before he met Galileo. Arrighetti tells us that until he turned twenty-four Filippo’s culture was sharply limited to the arts of dancing, fencing, and horsemanship.\(^45\) But at this point in his life something happened and Filippo quickly became the marvel of the Florentine letterati as before he had been the marvel of the cavalieri.

According to Arrighetti, in less than a year he mastered Latin and read the Latin classics. Aristotle’s rhetoric and poetics were his next step. Surprising everybody, less than three years after he had begun to study Latin, he had mastered logic, mathematics, the entire Aristotelian corpus, and the most important among Aristotle’s commentators. Soon after, he became a protagonist in Florence’s cultural and academic life and started to hold a private academy in his palace.\(^46\) According to Arrighetti, by the time Galileo came on stage, Filippo had already grown disillusioned about the Aristotelian


\(^45\) «... si che in tutto si rimase addietro in lui ogni cognizione di lettere, desiderio d’alcuna scienza non l’aveva ancora invaghiito.», ARRIGHETTI, *Delle lodi*, p. 28.

system and was ready to accept and support Galileo’s new philosophy.\textsuperscript{47}

Filippo’s fragile health may have played also a relevant role in his turning away from chivalric pursuits and in orienting him toward more intellectual activities.\textsuperscript{48} In fact, paradoxically for a would-be knight, Filippo had a very delicate health that kept him away not only from the active military life he seemed to aspire to but even from some of the court tournaments. In a letter of 20 July 1608, the Grand Duchess Cristina wrote Filippo that

Havendo Noi bisogno d’un gentiluomo di qualità, che nella festa di ballo che’ll Venti stia appresso alla persona di Don Francesco Mio figliuolo, il quale rappresenterà Colò Re, habbiamo disegnato di valerci di V.S. onde conseguentemente ella non potrà intervenire al detto ballo. E tanto più ci è parso di fare tale elezione, considerando che in questi tempi caldi r'ha­vere spesso ad esercitarsi a' cavallo, come è necessario, potrebbe far nocumento non piccolo alla sua sanità, et ci dispiacerebbe che quasi la cagione fusse proceduta da Noi. Però apparecchi a quest’altro officio, che sarà anche di maggior gusto nostro, et il Signore Iddio la prosperi.\textsuperscript{49}

The problems of Filippo’s health (and Cristina’s concern about them) re-emerge in another letter. Writing to the nobleman Antonio Antinori in April 1610, Cristina told him that

Noi abbiamo inteso che Filippo Salviati tratta di comprar quella villa della Marchesa Malaspina a Cicioli [or Civoli] per desiderio d’haver un luogo di buon’aria, vicino alle possessioni che egli tiene in quel paese, et perché ci vien referto che il medesimo pensiero era venuto prima anche a voi, abbiamo considerato che il vostro bisogno non è tale, che contrappesando-lo con le ragioni che ne ha il Salviati, si della vicinanza, come della sanità, voi non possiate compiacerlo di lasciar far questa compra a lui. Crediamo che lo fareste anche per propria cortesia, ma nondimeno ci è parso d’aggiungergci questa Nostra richiesta, accio sappiate che ne fareste a Noi piacere accetissimo, et Dio vi conservi.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., pp. 33-39.
\textsuperscript{48} «Io son sicuro, se debol sanità non avesse contraddito sua voglia, che avremmo veduto il Sig. Filippo Salviati sperimentar suo valore per li travagli dell’arme, e correre anch’egli tutti quel rischi per li quali coranto è bella la gloria militare», Arrighetti, Delle lodi, p. 26.
\textsuperscript{49} ASF, «Mediceo Principato 6038», (Registro di lettere di Madama da’ 12 Luglio 1608 fino a 20 di giugno 1611s), ff. 2v-3r.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., f. 93r. As far as I can tell, Filippo di not buy Malaspina’s villa mentioned in the letter. Such a villa is not mentioned in Ewa Karwacka Codini and Milletta Sbrilli, Archivio Salviati - Documenti sui beni immobiliari dei Salviati: palazzi, ville, feudi, piante del territorio.
My hypothesis is that humanistic and, later, scientific culture helped Filippo construct an identity for himself in a context of rapid social change and personal contingencies in which it may have been difficult for him to find suitable or established «role models». Because of his father’s early death right at the time when his social group and his family were quickly refashioning themselves, Filippo could not rely on the introduction to court culture and networks he might have obtained from him and, as we have seen, Filippo’s career may have not been uncle Antonio’s highest priority. Then, a precarious health probably prevented him from pursuing the «knightly» ethos he had developed in his youth also as a result of the identity crisis he and his social group were experiencing. Finally, Filippo may have found it difficult to fashion himself as a great aristocrat who shunned court appointments because his financial resources – although remarkable – were not exactly royal.

In his search for a suitable identity, Filippo may have found in Galilean science a new form of noble self-fashioning – this time an intellectual one. He probably saw in the new natural philosophy a culture fitting his self-representation as a great aristocrat. In those same years the possible symbiosis between aristocratic ethos and the new natural philosophy was being articulated by Prince Federico Cesi – a Roman aristocrat who, together with the other Roman Barons, was also undergoing a serious crisis in social role and identity.\(^{51}\) Cesi (and, I suggest, Salviati) did not support Galilean science primarily because of its practical usefulness. Usefulness was not a category aristocrats were expected to value very much. More

\(^{51}\) Although Cesi’s aristocratic status was quite established, he shared some aspects of Salviati’s predicament. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Roman Baronage (the high Roman aristocracy to which the Cesi family belonged to with the Cesarini, Colonna, Orsini, Savelli, etc.) experienced a serious crisis in its financial and political strength because of the increasingly absolutist nature of papal rule. On the financial decline of the Roman baronage see Carlo Mistruzzi, «La nobiltà nello Stato Pontificio», Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato, 23 (1963), 206-244, and (with reference to the Cesi family) Jean Dejumeau, Vie Economique et Sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle (Paris, De Boccard, 1959), vol. I, pp.153-155, 434-438, 467, 471-472. As Enrico Stumpo put it: «Although some of the most important Roman families such as the Colonna, the Orsini, the Cesarini, and the Caetani were involved, the stocks of those monti did not meet much luck in the title market precisely because those families were already in serious financial crisis. The incomes from their estates, while rich, were not sufficient to allow for and maintain the very high standards of living necessary in the Rome of that age, standards that could have been assured only by the benevolence of the various popes...». Il capitale finanziario a Roma fra cinque e seicento (Milano, Giuffrè, 1985), p. 268. This decline was clear to contemporaries. As Traiano Boccalini sarcastically put it, «the poppies, high as cypresses already» had been reduced to «the humble lowness of dwarfish violets.» (Traiano Boccalini, Ragguagli di Parnaso, Luigi Firpo (ed.) (Bari, Laterza, 1948 ), vol. III, p. 83).
probably, what appealed to them was the intellectual sprezzatura of the new natural philosophy. As Cesi put it, a noble individual should display a noble mind, that is, he could not subject himself to a philosophical system (like Aristotle's). To buy into a system was to turn oneself into an «intellectual slave» — a condition quite unacceptable to a noble.\(^{52}\) What may have made Galileo's science so appealing to aristocrats or patricians like Salviati, Cesi, or Sagredo was its «philosophical nonchalance»: it was a natural philosophy tailored to noble culture. True, the new science did explain natural phenomena, but it did so without relying on a philosophical system that had fallen prisoner to its own assumptions and definitions.

To conclude, I would suggest that while mathematics had been represented as a discipline with little social status which, consequently, could not be easily integrated into aristocratic culture (except perhaps as a practical toll for the design of fortifications), the «philosophical freedom» associated to the new science made it quite palatable to noble intellectuals. However, as we know from biographies of Sagredo, Tycho, or Cesi, serious involvement in astronomy or natural philosophy was not always viewed as proper by their families or peers.\(^{53}\) But these same biographical sources tell us that, while belonging to very prestigious families, these virtuosi were also experiencing identity crises rooted either in the contingencies of their private lives (as with Tycho and Salviati) or in the larger predicament of the social group they belonged to.\(^{54}\)

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\(^{52}\) For instance, commenting on the work of the Aristotelian philosopher Lagalla (which he saw as caught in the Peripatetic prison), Cesi claimed that «dignified intellects are bound to freedom» (GO, vol. XI, n. 560, p.158). Then, referring to Foscarini's characterization of the Lincei as Copernicans, he replied: «The author assumes that all our companions [Lincei] are Copernicans, despite the fact that that's not true. All that we are committed to as a group is freedom in natural philosophy» (GO, vol. XII, n. 1089, p. 151).


\(^{54}\) Cesi's predicament has been sketched earlier. On the possible relationship between Cesi's aristocratic ethos and his establishment of the Accademia dei Lincei, see Mario Biagioli, «Courtly Comets», Chapter 5 of Galileo Courtier (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1993).

Tycho's biography describes a very peculiar infancy. As known, he was aggressively adopted — basically kidnapped — by his uncle. This made it possible for Tycho to deviate from the standard career of a Brahe (a family of professional warriors) and to pursue humanistic and then astronomical studies. I see Uraniborg (the castle/observatory he later build on the...
It took more than free time and money for a virtuoso to become interested in science and in patronizing it. The process by which Filippo became interested in Galileo's science suggests that we should look at the ways in which science provided an alternative culture for people of patrician or aristocratic background whose social role and identity was in transition. This may give us some important clues in the culture of the baroque virtuosi and in their role in the scientific revolution.

**SUMMARY**

New archival documents related to the life of Filippo Salviati are presented. One of these documents shows that, contrary to what previously believed, Filippo's departure from Florence in 1613 was not the result of a dispute over precedence at court. The second part of the essay sketches a possible relation between Filippo's patrician culture and his endorsement of Galileo's science.

island of Hveen) as a concrete picture of the hybrid and unconventional social identity Tycho constructed for himself – that of an astronomico-feudal lord.

In Sagredo's case we find a very proud member of the very proud Venetian patriciate – a class which, despite its desperate attempt to cling on to the glory of its past – was rapidly and inevitably declining as a socio-political and financial force. As displayed by Sagredo's letters in Galileo's correspondence, «freedom» was one of the greatest values of the Venetian patriciate, and his own identity as a virtuoso practising the new natural philosophy was closely tied to this ethos – one that, given the actual political status of Venice, was increasingly nostalgic and detached from reality.