



Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism (Science and Its Conceptual Foundations series)

By Mario Biagioli

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Informed by currents in sociology, cultural anthropology, and literary theory, *Galileo, Courtier* is neither a biography nor a conventional history of science. In the court of the Medicis and the Vatican, Galileo fashioned both his career and his science to the demands of patronage and its complex systems of wealth, power, and prestige. Biagioli argues that Galileo's courtly role was integral to his science--the questions he chose to examine, his methods, even his conclusions.

Galileo, Courtier is a fascinating cultural and social history of science highlighting the workings of power, patronage, and credibility in the development of science.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Biagioli here views Galileo's career in a new light. Instead of the traditional view of Galileo as the "new scientist" championing the Copernican cause against the Aristotelians, Biagioli presents a convincing argument for Galileo as the courtly gentleman whose patronage goals drove his scientific work. Biagioli begins by describing how client-patron relationships worked in early 17th-century Italy, how Galileo used those social structures to advance himself from artisan to university professor to Cosimo de Medici's Court Philosopher and how his actions helped raise mathematics and natural science to a respected position. Biagioli then discusses how patronage guided scientific discourse, ending with Galileo's eventual downfall. Though scholarly, this superb book is a joy to read and provides new insight into the history of science.

- *Eric D. Albright, Galter Health Sciences Lib., Northwestern Univ., Chicago*

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From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Mario Biagioli is distinguished professor of law and science and technology studies and director of the Center for Innovation Studies at the University of California, Davis.

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