

Tracing the roots of the European scientific enterprise: The Accademia del Cimento in Florence.

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.

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