

No rose without thorns, Mr. Galilei: Science under the Italian Inquisition

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Abstract :

We study the impact of the Counter-Reformation on the scientists of early modern Europe. As Reformation ideas spread all across the continent, Pope Paul III issued in 1542 a bull that initiated a central, repressive Inquisition, which progressively spread to all states of the Italian peninsula. Across a series of empirical strategies, we show that it led to a dramatic decrease in the number of notable scientists, while leaving other occupations untouched. Using individuals' migration patterns and family linkages, we show evidence of both deterrence and socialization mechanisms.