The Accademia dei Lincei was founded in Rome by a small group of young and ambitious scholars: the aristocrat Federico Cesi, Anastasio de Filis, Francesco Stelluti and the Dutch physician and simplicist Johannes Eckius. Most of them were barely in their 20's and shared a pioneering conception of the intellectual experience. It is important to underline, from the outset, the initial aspect of extemporaneousness of this initiative and the young age of its promoters, who appear to be—in the very first chapter of their adventure—quite isolated and lacking previous important experiences. As is widely known, the Accademia dei Lincei is considered—by far—one of the most prestigious and innovative cultural institutions ever founded in Italy. Its main fields of activity involved the study of nature, including astronomy, botany,
anatomy and biology, but mathematics and the humanities were also included within the sphere of their investigation. After its short but very intensive activity in the seventeenth century, the Academy was refounded in modern times, and today it is invested with an unquestioned aura of authoritativeness.\footnote{After the death of Federico Cesi, the Academy slowly disappeared. It was refounded only in 1847 at the suggestion of Pope Pius IX (Pontificia Accademia dei nuovi Lincei); after the Unification of Italy, in 1870, the Academy took the name of Reale Accademia dei Lincei, not without some harsh controversies among its members. During fascism, the Lincei suffered from competition with the Accademia d'Italia, founded and promoted by Mussolini himself, to the point of risking being suppressed. See Giovanni Paoloni, “L’Accademia dei Lincei dal 1870 al secondo dopoguerra,” in \textit{L’Accademia dei Lincei e la cultura europea nel XVII secolo. Manoscritti, Libri, Incisioni, Strumenti Scientifici}, exhibition catalogue, ed. Anna Maria Capecchi, Caterina Forni Montagna, Paolo Galluzzi, Anna Nicolò, and Giovanni Paoloni (Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1992), 169–182.}

The birth date of the Academy is very well known: on 17 August 1603 the four members solemnly declared the foundation of their fellowship, and a month later, on September 25th at 9:50 in the morning, they confirmed their commitment taking care to establish the astrological position associated with the event. Thanks to the favour of the planets, they would enjoy the protection of Mercury which would assure them huge rewards in their search for Learning.\footnote{Mercury was considered to be the planet associated with intelligence and which oversaw scientific activities. See Anna Maria Partini, “I primi lincei e l’ermetismo,” \textit{Rendiconti dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche}, ser. 8, no. 41 (1986), 59–83.}

Such an explicit reference to some typical Renaissance systems of Knowledge (like alchemy and the art of memory as well) defines, from the very beginning, the esoteric roots of the Lincean adventure. It is widely known that the history of the Academy can be subdivided into two main, very different, moments: first, 1603–1605, corresponding to a period of clandestinity, when the fellows were discouraged from pursuing their goals and one of the founders, Johannes Eckius, was induced to leave the country possibly because he was suspected of heresy; second, 1609–1630, corresponding to the very apex of the institution, when the Linceans were able to reorganize themselves and to obtain the official recognition of the larger community, both from the political and cultural point of view. During this time, the Academy achieved many important goals and tried to establish a complex web of relationships in Italy and abroad. Moreover, this was also the period