

# **TIMEKEEPERS IN HISTORICAL OBSERVATORIES**

## **Challenges in conservation, restoration and maintenance**

International Workshop

Palermo, 25-27 March 2025

***Anna Giatti***

freelance restorer, Florence

### **The clock made by Officina Galileo and donated to the Arcetri Observatory**

In the late 1860s a company was founded in Florence to manufacture instruments for physics and optics named *Officina Galileo*. It was one of the few industries in Italy dedicated to producing precision instruments such as microscopes, spectroscopes, telegraphic devices and electric clocks. Among its notable creations were three highly precise pendulum clocks, known as astronomical clocks. However, one of them had a “private destination” having been kept with the family of the owner, and later director, of the company. Family members were directly involved in preserving this clock, which was kept in constant operation. The fact resulted in the recording of information about its maintenance, mixed with personal memories and family events.

In 2024, Giacomo Franceschini, heir of this family, decided to donate the clock to the Florentine Astrophysical Observatory located on the famous Arcetri Hill, where it remains in operation. Thanks to the collaboration of the skilled mechanics who helped manage the transportation and installation at Arcetri, I will analyze the challenges of maintaining the clock in operation and the impact on the preservation of the materials and mechanisms. The special skills required for its care will also be considered.

**Anna Giatti** is the curator of the Cabinet of Physics at the Fondazione Scienza e Tecnica in Florence, and restorer of historical scientific instruments. Her interests include investigation on the materials of the scientific instruments, history of scientific experimental practices, preventive conservation, cataloguing, and popularization of scientific culture