

# The Chair of Ethics in the University of Naples and Giambattista Vico's *La Scienza Nuova*

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## The author:

Felix Waldmann is the J. H. Plumb College Lecturer in History at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he was formerly a Junior Research Fellow. He received his BA and PhD from Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and he was awarded the Quentin Skinner Prize for the MPhil in Political Thought and Intellectual History. He is the author of *Further letters of David Hume* (Edinburgh Bibliographical Society, 2014), and he is currently preparing an edition of Hume's *Occasional writings and unpublished manuscripts* for the Clarendon Edition of the Works of David Hume, and the rudiments of a new edition of John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* for the Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke. His monograph, *After Vico: philosophy, politics, and the Enlightenment in Naples, 1668-1799*, is in preparation. He has been awarded visiting fellowships at Princeton University, the University of Edinburgh, McGill University, and the British School at Rome. He is a co-convener of the Political Thought and Intellectual History Seminar.

## The paper:

This paper attempts to provide a revised context for the writing and reception of Giambattista Vico's *La scienza nuova* (1725, 1730, 1744). On the basis of extensive archival research, it locates the publication of Vico's work against the backcloth of significant change to the curriculum in moral philosophy ('Ethics') in the University of Naples, particularly in the manuscripts of Celestino Galiani (1681-1753), rector of the University (1732-53), and the *Elementa metaphysicae* (1743) of Antonio Genovesi (1713-69), the University professor of moral philosophy (1746-54), and professor of commerce and mechanics (1754-69), who reputedly taught as many as thirty thousand students between 1746 and 1769.