

International conference

Women, knowledge, and academic institutions: a Paduan debate three-hundred years later

June 16th 2023 marks the three-hundredth anniversary of a seminal conference that took place at the Accademia dei Ricovrati (currently Accademia Galileiana di Scienze, Lettere e Arti) in Padua in 1723. The debated topic, sponsored by the naturalist and President of the Academy Antonio Vallisneri, was whether women ought to be allowed to cultivate the sciences and the arts and whether they should be given access to scientific institutions. The proceedings, published in 1729, confirm the resonance and the cultural implications of this event even beyond Padua: the conference papers famously included responses from Milanese mathematician Maria Gaetana Agnesi and from Sienese poet Aretafila Savini de' Rossi. The Paduan debate needs to be contextualized within a larger European discussion in the 17th and 18th century, when women gradually began to be admitted to the Academies (sometimes even thanks to the favor of the Church). The Accademia dei Ricovrati itself had already opened its doors to female members, though with no voting prerogatives up to the 1960s: Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia, the first of several other European women, became an honorary member in 1669 and her degree in Philosophy on **June 25th 1678** was celebrated with a symposium. This anniversary is therefore quite relevant not only for the city of Padua and its University but more broadly for European social and intellectual history, with special reference to the challenging relationships between the politics of gender and the politics of knowledge.

However, the international conference on **Women, knowledge, and academic institutions** does not intend to be a commemoration of a three-hundred-year-old dispute: it rather aims to turn the early modern debate into an opportunity to ask again some of the key questions that continue to be urgent today, vis-à-vis contemporary interpretations of the role of the sciences in a changing global scenario and the position of women scientists in it.

Moving to the present, the second part of the conference grafts an investigation of the still unequal relationship between women and science onto the narrative of the past, in order to move the debate forward. It asks how the languages and paths of knowledge have been and can be renewed so as to include more and more women as agents of innovation and change; it looks at how women are transforming the contents of knowledge, how they are reopening and renewing cultural, scientific and academic archives, and intervening in the construction of a more equitable and equal science and society.

WOMEN, KNOWLEDGE AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

26-27 giugno 2023 - Palazzo del Bo



UNIVERSITÀ
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International conference

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University of Padua
26 - 27 June 2023

26 June 2023

Palazzo Bo, Aula Magna

13:30 Registration

14:00 **Greetings and introduction**

Annalisa Oboe, Direttrice Centro di Ateneo Elena Cornaro
Giovanna Zaniolo, Presidente vicaria, Accademia Galileiana
Lorenzo Rustighi, Docente FiSPPA

14:30 - 15:30 **Keynote address**

REBECCA MESSBARGER, Washington University
Introduced by Carlotta Sorba, DiSSGeA, Unipd

Women in the Room: The Ricovrati Debate and the Making of the Modern Public Sphere

This talk will consider the 1723 Paduan debate as a launchpad for women's expanding public presence and authority during the 18th century.

Rebecca Messbarger is Professor of Italian at Washington University at St. Louis, Affiliate Professor of History, Art History, Global Studies, Performing Arts, and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies in Italian, and Co-Founder and First Director of Medical Humanities. Her major research interests center on Italian Enlightenment culture, in

particular the place and purpose of women in civic, academic and social life, and the intersection of art and science in the production of anatomical wax models during the age. Her most recent monograph, *The Lady Anatomist: The Life and Work of Anna Morandi Manzolini* (University of Chicago Press, 2010) traced the remarkable life of the 18th-century Bolognese woman from provincial artist to internationally renowned anatomist and anatomical modeler for the University of Bologna's famous medical school. She is the author of numerous articles, including "The Re-birth of Venus in Florence's Royal Museum of Physics and Natural History," in the *Oxford Journal of the History of Collections*, winner of both the James L. Clifford Prize and the Percy Adam's Prize for the best article in 2012-13. Most recently, she co-edited with Christopher Johns and Phil Gavitt the volume *Benedict XIV and the Enlightenment: Art, Science and Spirituality* (U of Toronto Press, 2016).

15:30 - 16:00

PAOLA RUDAN, University of Bologna
Introduced by Lorenzo Rustighi, FiSSPA, Unipd

Challenging Man's monopoly of reason: Margaret Cavendish's politics of rhetoric and science

Reading the *Orations of Divers Sorts* (1662) and the *Philosophical Letters* (1664), Margaret Cavendish's "authorial strategy" – aimed at justifying her speaking out in fields of knowledge commonly precluded to women – is presented as a critique of Man's "monopoly of reason" and its institutions, to which corresponds an original articulation of the conception of political obligation and the relationship between freedom and power.

Paola Rudan is Associate professor in History of Political Thought at the Department of History, University of Bologna. Her research has focused on the transatlantic dimension of Eighteenth and Nineteenth century political thought, and today addresses the history of women's political thought and feminist political theory. She is the author of monographs on Simón Bolívar's and Jeremy Bentham's social and political thought, and of a book on the history of the concept of «woman».

16:00 - 16:30 Coffee Break

16:30 - 17:00

FRANCESCA ANTONELLI, University of Valencia
Introduced by Chiara Xausa, DIT, Unibo

A few perspectives from the “margins”. On women, gender, and knowledge outside academic institutions

The inclusion of some female members within Italian academic institutions was quite exceptional in eighteenth-century Europe. In France, for example, universities and scientific academies were much more closed to the presence of women. This situation became even more radical with the emergence of new scientific institutions in the post-revolutionary era, which reinforced the marginalization of women from the institutional landscape until very recent times. However, as a number of studies have shown, women remained active producers of knowledge, first of all because institutions were far from being the only space for knowledge production.

Moreover, the boundaries between what is generally regarded as “institutional” and “public”, as opposed to “domestic” and “private”, were actually quite porous in the eighteenth-century societies and cultures. In this presentation I will highlight some of these tensions, by focusing on the case of Marie-Anne Paulze-Lavoisier (1758-1836), a woman of the French *haute bourgeoisie* who remained known as a scientific associate of her husband, the French chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794). In spite of her work as a translator, illustrator, and laboratory “assistant”, Paulze-Lavoisier never tried to enter a scientific institution and was apparently content with her “marginal” role in chemistry of the time. And yet, her work was not entirely invisible among her contemporaries. As we will see, it was – paradoxically – by playing with her marginality that she managed to build her own reputation as a scientific collaborator and to keep that reputation alive well after the death of her famous husband.

Francesca Antonelli got her Phd at the University of Bologna and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, with a dissertation on Marie-Anne Paulze-Lavoisier and Lavoisier’s *Registres de laboratoire*. She is currently Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellow at the University of Valencia, with a research project on materiality and gender in eighteenth-century naturalists’ travel journals. Among her publications are: *Scrivere e sperimentare. Marie-Anne Paulze-Lavoisier, segretaria della “nuova chimica” (1771-1836)*, Roma, Viella, 2022; *Gendered Touch. Women, Men, and Knowledge-making in Early-modern Europe*, edited by Francesca Antonelli, Antonella Romano, and Paolo Savoia, Leiden, Brill, 2022.

17:00 - 17:30

FEDERICA FAVINO, Sapienza University of Rome
Introduced by Stefano Poggi, DiSSGeA, Unipd

Elisabetta and the Others. The presence of women in the 19th - century Italian Academies of Sciences

Countess Elisabetta Fiorini Mazzanti (1799-1876) – a bryologist acknowledged by the community of the (male) botanists of the time – was admitted to the Pontifical Academy of the New Lynceans in 1856. The Academy was then the 'temple' of masculine academic science, and it was also located in the most conservative State of the Peninsula. This case has long been overlooked (for reasons that should also be investigated), and it was not even the only one in 19th-century Italy. My speech will present the story of Elisabetta Fiorini Mazzanti in comparison with the (few) known cases that concern female academic admissions at the time, but also cases in which women scientists were not admitted. In this way I will try to provide elements to speculate on the social and cultural dynamics lying behind such choices.

Federica Favino is Assistant Professor in History of Science at the Department of History Anthropology Religions Art Performing Arts at Sapienza University of Rome. Her research deals with scientific culture in early modern and modern Rome, with a special focus on the world of the Curia, the Academies, the University, the religious orders, as well as the relationships between gender and scientific culture. She is the author of *La filosofia naturale di Giovanni Ciampoli* (Florence, Olschki 2015); *Donne e scienza nella Roma dell'Ottocento* (Rome, Viella, 2020), and co-editor of *Copernicus banned. The entangled matter of the anti-Copernican decree of 1616*, Florence, Olschki, 2018, with Natacha Fabbri.

17:30 - 17:45 **Closing remarks**

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Palazzo Bo
Aula Magna

26 giugno 2023
ore 18.00–19:30

UNA GIORNATA CON ELENA



Premio di Studio Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia - Università degli Studi di Padova

Il Centro di Ateneo Elena Cornaro, con il sostegno dell'Associazione Alumni dell'Università degli Studi di Padova, dell'Associazione degli Amici dell'Università di Padova e di Solgar Italia Multinutrient S.p.A., attribuisce il quinto **Premio di studio intitolato a Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia Università degli Studi di Padova**.

Il riconoscimento va a studi di giovani ricercatrici o ricercatori che ricostruiscano la storia dei saperi, della ricerca e della didattica in cui le donne si sono impegnate nel tempo, individuando o dando risalto al contributo autorevole di figure femminili, proponendo nuove ricerche sulle differenze/disparità di genere rilevabili nei vari ambiti scientifico disciplinari, offrendo interventi che riguardano i saperi scientifici e umanisti da una prospettiva femminista o degli studi di genere.

Una 'menzione speciale' viene attribuita a elaborati ritenuti meritevoli nei campi dell'integrazione alimentare, della nutrizione umana, della nutraceutica e dell'alimentazione funzionale per la corretta fisiologia della persona e/o per aumentati fabbisogni nutritivi.

PATRIZIA CARRANO, autrice di *Illuminata. La storia di Elena Lucrezia Cornaro, prima donna laureata nel mondo* (Mondadori, 2000): **Le ombre di Elena, sapiente illuminata**

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(Day 2)

27 June 2023

Palazzo Bo, Archivio Antico

9:00 - 10:00 Keynote address

LONDA SCHIEBINGER, Stanford University
Introduced by Annalisa Oboe, DiSLL, Unipd

Gendered Innovations: Enhancing Excellence in Science & Technology

How can we harness the creative power of sex, gender, and intersectional analysis for discovery and innovation? This talk will explore what gendered innovations is, how it works, its methods and case studies. As time allows, we will take case studies from health & biomedicine, AI/ML, gendering social robots, and Embedded EthiCS, climate change, and more. We will also discuss policy initiatives at funding agencies, peer-reviewed journals, such as *Nature*, and universities and research institutions. To match the global reach of science and technology, Gendered Innovations was developed through a collaboration of over 220 experts from across the United States, Europe, Canada, and Asia. Major funders include the European Commission, the U.S. National Science Foundation, and Stanford University. For late-breaking news on research in this area, join the Gendered Innovations listserv.

Londa Schiebinger is the John L. Hinds Professor of History of Science at Stanford University, and Founding Director of Gendered Innovations in Science, Health & Medicine, Engineering, and Environment. She is a leading international expert on gender in science and technology and has addressed the United Nations, the European Parliament, and numerous funding agencies on the topic. Schiebinger received her Ph.D. from Harvard University and is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is the recipient of numerous prizes and awards, including the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Research Prize and Guggenheim Fellowship. She has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from the Universitat de València, Spain, 2018; Lunds Universitet, Sweden, 2017; Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, 2013. Her prize-winning books include: *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Harvard University Press, 1989); *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Beacon Press, 1993; Rutgers University Press, 2004); *Has Feminism Changed Science?* (Harvard University Press,

1999); *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Harvard University Press, 2004); *Gendered Innovations: How Gender Analysis Contributes to Research* (European Commission, 2013); *Secret Cures of Slaves: People, Plants, and Medicine in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford University Press, 2017); and with Robert N. Proctor, *Agnology: The Making and Unmaking of Ignorance* (Stanford University Press, 2008). Her books have been translated into numerous languages.

10:00 - 10:30

GIOVANNELLA BAGGIO, University of Padua
Introduced by Luca Fabris, DMM, Unipd

From Gender Medicine to Gender Specific Medicine

Gender Medicine is a branch of the discipline that focuses on the influence of sex (biological features) and gender (sociological features) on human physiology, pathophysiology and pathology. In the last 50 years, too many studies have focused on diseases mainly or exclusively on patients of a single sex. Nonetheless, Gender Medicine is not exclusively concerned with men's or women's sexual health, as it investigates different responses in terms of therapy, diagnostic features, pathological mechanisms as well as prevention of pathologies affecting people regardless of gender.

Some striking examples are cardiovascular diseases, which have been studied mainly in men, regardless of myocardial infarction being the leading cause of death in women, with very different symptoms and pathophysiological characteristics; solid and haematological neoplasms, which cause higher mortality in men and exhibit important differences in the two genders; dementias, which dramatically prevail in women and include different biological risk factors; osteoarthritis, which causes a high degree of motor disability in women; organ transplants, which are strongly conditioned by sex matching; and osteoporosis, which was studied only in women, despite men developing it 10 years later with important complications and higher mortality rates after fractures. Depression is more frequent in females, but it is underdiagnosed in men who have a very high suicide rate, too. Cancer patients have different symptoms, pathophysiology, and response to therapy according to gender.

There are many more examples and data in all fields of medicine. It is therefore necessary to progress from the concept of Gender Medicine to that of Gender-specific Medicine, since all medical specialties should take gender differences into account.

In the era of knowledge of the human genome and Artificial Intelligence, Gender-specific Medicine is a serious gap in scientific research worldwide. Women live longer, but their gain compared to men is often sickness and disability. Men, on the other hand, have higher mortality rates in most diseases. In Italy, the first law on Gender Medicine was passed in January 2018, and it prescribes a change in training, information, research and medical practice. Furthermore, a training plan was signed in March by the Ministers of Health, of

University and of Research. Gender-specific medicine is thus a scientific, ethical, moral, social and legal duty.

Giovannella Baggio, M.D. at Padua University Medical School (1972), is specialized in Internal Medicine and in Endocrinology. In 1995, she became Full Professor of Internal Medicine and from 1995 to 1999 held the Chair of Geriatrics and Gerontology in the University of Sassari. From 1999 to 2017 she was the Director of the Internal Medicine Unit of the University Hospital of Padua and from 2013 to 2017 she had the first Chair in Italy of Gender Medicine at the University of Padua. She is now Senior Full Professor at the University of Padua. She is the Founder (2009) and President of the Italian Research Centre for Gender Health and Medicine and has organized numerous National Congress on Gender Medicine in Padua. She is member elected of the Scientific Board of the International Society for Gender Medicine (IGM). She was the Organizer and President of the 10th International IGM Congress on Gender Medicine held in Padua 16-17 September 2022. Author of more than 270 publications in international and national journals and co-editor of 6 monographs.

10:30 - 11:00

ELENA GISSI, National Research Council, Institute of Marine Sciences, Venice
Introduced by Claudia Padovani, SPGI, Unipd

Sex analysis in marine biology: insights and opportunities for effective conservation in a changing climate

Sex analysis enhances excellence in science. Sex analysis – the process of incorporating biological sex considerations into research design and analysis – has produced advancements and innovative solutions in many scientific areas, such as biomedicine and the motor vehicle industry. In marine biological research, a fundamental but often overlooked characteristic of organisms is sex – which is distinct from sociocultural gender. Sex describes differences in sexual characteristics within living organisms that go beyond their reproductive functions and affect appearance, physiology, or neuroendocrine, behavioral, and metabolic systems. As part of my Marie Skłodowska Curie research with Prof. Schiebinger and Prof. Micheli at Stanford University, I have been working on how to incorporate sex analysis in marine biological research. In this talk, I will review how sex influences marine organisms. Through review of sex analysis applications in marine biological research I found that sex broadly affects the morphology, physiology, behavior, and distribution of organisms and population across taxa, with evidence of sex-specific differences in survival to thermal stress, timing of biological mechanisms, and energetics. Sex is frequently not reported or tested likely because researchers are not aware of sex-based differences, assume that including sex-specific information would not influence experimental results, or are unable to obtain

sex-specific data. To facilitate future integration of sex into marine biological research, I synthesize current approaches, discuss methodological and logistical challenges, and lay out guidelines for future research.

Elena Gissi, PhD, Senior Researcher at the National Research Council, Institute of Marine Sciences, Venice, is a Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellow with Stanford University, USA, with her project MEDIX “Marine Environmental Dynamics and seX-based analysis for climate change adaptation in marine spatial planning”. Her research focuses on understanding the responses to climate change of marine life and to incorporate this knowledge in ocean planning. She has over a decade of research experience in conservation biology, producing ecological insights for decision making processes. She has applied her findings in marine spatial planning, in environmental and energy planning. Dr. Gissi has published 46 peer-reviewed articles in the field of ecology, ecosystem-based management, and conservation planning.

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 - 12:00

ANNE-SOPHIE GODFROY, University Paris Est Créteil
Introduced by Silvana Badaloni, DEI, Unipd

Making Young Researchers' Voices Heard for Equality: A key issue for the future of European research

Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and a key principle of the European set of social rights as defined in the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2020-2025. Feminist research has inspired gender equality policies in science and technology since the early 2000s, and then the commitment to integrate gender, and more recently intersectionality, into research content. Even if many intersecting inequalities originate in the early stages of the career (Murgia & Poggio 2019), gender equality policies specifically targeted at young researchers are the blind spot of gender equality policies. The high level of mobility and diversity of status partly explain this lack, as well as the contested definition of 'young researcher'. This paper is based on the experience of the COST Action VOICES (CA 20137, 2021-2025), a research network with more than four hundred members. The Action facilitates a community of gender equality practitioners, researchers and stakeholders across Europe, with an important participation of members from so-called Inclusiveness Target Countries (ITC). The paper explores how VOICES can bring new concepts, new data and new practices to the discussion on future research in Europe. Beyond social justice and economic concerns, gender equality policies have the potential to bring new ideas, new questions and new actors into the discussion and thus transform not only science but also society.

Anne-Sophie Godfroy is associate professor at University Paris Est Créteil and researcher at République des Savoirs, a joint transdisciplinary research unit of the Ecole Normale Supérieure-PSL, the CNRS and the Collège de France. The laboratory is located in Paris in the Latin Quarter. Her research interests are philosophy of science, science studies, women and gender studies, epistemology.

12:00 - 12:30

MARIA CRISTINA LA ROCCA, University of Padua
Introduced by Carlotta Sorba, DiSSGeA, Unipd

Catching the unexpected. Writing women and women public responsibilities in the early Middle Ages

Still in 2014, French historian Eric Bournazel imperiously stated: 'As for the Carolingian queen, in this resolutely masculine royal lineage universe, all that remains for her - apparently - is to devote herself to good works, embroidery, and the delights of canonically assisted procreation. And the female genius will do the rest'. My article aims to show how research on Carolingian women and queens has shown exactly the opposite. It is no coincidence that precisely that research has been undertaken by women scholars, who have succeeded not only in shedding light on the deep voices of Carolingian women within the written sources, but also in revealing their formal and informal responsibilities. This paper addresses two different themes: the texts written by women and the official texts that show their role in the construction of the image of public power.

Maria Cristina La Rocca is Full professor of Medieval History at the University of Padua. Her research interests concern various aspects of the early Middle Ages and focus on the Italian case in relation to the European context.

12:30 - 13:00

FRANCESCA VIDOTTO, University of Western Ontario
Introduced by Maria Giulia Sestito, FISPPA, Unipd

Is feminism changing physics?

A critical mass of women becoming present, together with the affirmation of feminist ideas and practices, has led to major changes in different disciplines, such as biology or

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archeology. How deep is the influence of women's presence and feminism in different disciplines? Which format could this take for the "hard sciences"? I discuss these issues from the perspective of physics. I argue that different attitudes depend on different philosophical stances. Feminism may indeed be considered the source of some changes that are already happening: I briefly review some of them in my talk. Feminism may influence scientific communities and scientific practices, as well as scientific ideas. I conclude with an example in this direction concerning the interpretation of the quantum theory.

Francesca Vidotto is a theoretical physicist. Much of her work focuses on the application of Loop Quantum Gravity to cosmology and black holes. She tackles the problem of understanding the quantum properties of space and time in an interdisciplinary way, bringing together the mathematical, experimental and philosophical perspectives. She studied at the universities of Padova, Pavia, and Marseille, and she held postdoctoral positions in France, The Netherlands and Spain. She is a member of the Physics and Astronomy Department and of the Philosophy Department at the University of Western Ontario, where she holds a Canada Research Chair in the Foundations of Physics. Francesca Vidotto has been active in promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, and is interested in feminist philosophies of science. She is also always keen to seek opportunities to bring together art and science.

13:00 – 13:30 Discussion and closing remarks

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Università di Padova
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Lorenzo Rustighi	Docente presso il Dipartimento di Filosofia, Sociologia, Pedagogia e Psicologia Applicata (FISPPA) Università di Padova
Carlotta Sorba	Direttrice del Centro interuniversitario di Storia Culturale (CSC) Docente presso il Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Geografiche e dell'Antichità (DiSSGeA) Università di Padova