

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.

Comitato scientifico

Annalisa Oboe	Direttrice del Centro di Ateneo Elena Cornaro per i saperi, le culture e le politiche di genere Docente presso il Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Letterari (DiSLL), Università di Padova
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

Segreteria del convegno

Elisabetta Maria Mani	Centro di Ateneo Elena Cornaro - responsabile per l'organizzazione
Jada Pontello	Centro di Ateneo Elena Cornaro - responsabile per la comunicazione

WOMEN, KNOWLEDGE AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

26-27 giugno 2023 - Palazzo del Bo



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

26 giugno

Palazzo Bo, Aula Magna

13:30 Registration

14:00 Greetings and introduction

14:30 **Rebecca Messbarger**, Washington University

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

15:30 **Paola Rudan**, University of Bologna

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

16:30 **Francesca Antonelli**, University of Valencia

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

17:00 **Federica Favino**, Sapienza University of Rome

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

18:00 **Una giornata con Elena**

Cerimonia di assegnazione del Premio di studio intitolato a Elena Lucrezia Cornaro Piscopia Università degli Studi di Padova. Con la partecipazione della scrittrice **Patrizia Carrano**, autrice di *Illuminata. La storia di Elena Lucrezia Cornaro, prima donna laureata nel mondo* (Mondadori, 2000)

27 giugno

Palazzo Bo, Archivio Antico

09:00 **Londa Schiebinger**, Stanford University

Gendered Innovations: Enhancing Excellence in Science & Technology

10:00 **Giovannella Baggio**, University of Padua

From Gender Medicine to Gender Specific Medicine

10:30 **Elena Gissi**, National Research Council, Institute of Marine Sciences, Venice

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

11:30 **Anne-Sophie Godfroy**, University Paris Est Créteil

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

12:00 **Maria Cristina La Rocca**, University of Padua

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

12:30 **Francesca Vidotto**, University of Western Ontario

Is feminism changing physics?