



Università
Ca'Foscari
Venezia

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: PHYSIOGNOMONICA - Physiognomics as Philosophy: Reconceiving an Early Modern Science

FUNDING PROGRAMME: HORIZON 2020

CALL: H2020-MSCA-IF-2020 – Marie Skłodowska-Curie - Standard European Fellowship

DESCRIPTORS: History of philosophy, History of ideas, intellectual history, history of science, techniques and technologies, Modern and contemporary history

HOST DEPARTMENT: Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage

SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE: Marco Sgarbi

FELLOW: Muratori Cecilia

FINANCIAL DATA:

Project total costs	Overall funding assigned to UNIVE
€ 183.473,28	€ 183.473,28

ABSTRACT:

My project aims to uncover the hitherto unrecognised centrality of physiognomics within early modern philosophy. Physiognomics is the theory, stemming from Aristotle and other ancient sources, that body and soul are connected in such a way that it is possible to gain access to the soul by learning to read bodily signs. Building on fresh interest in medieval physiognomy, the project focuses on the richest yet least-studied period for the development of the discipline: from the late 15th century, when physiognomic texts started to circulate in print, to the early 17th century, when Cartesian dualism reconceived the body-mind relationship. I will define the corpus of philosophical physiognomic literature, with special attention to Venice and Paris, two fulcrums of the revival, where the majority of my archival research will take place. The project's objectives reflect the intrinsic interdisciplinarity of physiognomics in the period, investigating its practitioners' approaches to: 1) the interrelation between science and magic; 2) the differentiation between humans and animals; and 3) the conceptual distinction between mind and body. Topical issues of gender and race in physiognomic theories will be addressed. The outputs will include a monograph, an edition of a primary text, and an online, open-access anthology of sources. This ambitious dissemination plan is enabled by Ca' Foscari's programme Marie Curie+1, together with my advanced research skills and publication record. At Ca' Foscari and during my secondment at the Centre Koyré in Paris I will expand my areas of competence, especially in the history of science and in iconography. I will improve my French, a crucial language for my field. I will develop my palaeographical skills to produce a critical edition that will help to restore physiognomics to the intellectual map of early modernity. The project will thus greatly enhance the independence I need to secure my main career goal, a permanent academic post.

Planned Start date

15th May 2021

Planned End date

14th May 2023

BENEFICIARY:

