



Università Ca'Foscari Venezia

PROJECT ACRONYM AND TITLE: SOUNDEPTH- Sounding the Depths of Providence: Mineral (Re)generation, Natural Resources, and Human- Environment Interaction in the Early Modern Period

FUNDING PROGRAMME: HORIZON 2020

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

DESCRIPTORS: History of philosophy, History of ideas, Intellectual history, History of science, Techniques and technologies, Natural resources management, Mineralogy, Petrology, Igneous petrology, Metamorphic petrology, Social, conomic, cultural and political history

HOST DEPARTMENT: Department of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage

SCIENTIFIC RESPONSIBLE: Omodeo Pietro Daniel

FELLOW: Francesco Luzzini

FINANCIAL DATA:

Project total costs	Overall funding assigned to UNIVE
€ 251.002,56	€ 85.736,64

ABSTRACT:

My project aims to study how the stream of theoretical and practical knowledge which shaped the early modern debate on mineral generation influenced the role of humans as geological and environmental agents. Throughout the early modern period, the genesis and growth of minerals remained a central issue for natural philosophers, technicians, alchemists and practitioners in Europe. A long-standing dispute was fueled by scientific, philosophical, economic, political, cultural, geographical, religious, and social factors, and involved various theoretical and practical traditions: inquirers from different backgrounds confronted and influenced each other debating on the existence in ore veins of organic features such as “seeds,” “matrices,” “generation,” and “nourishment.” The persistence of these notions through the centuries can be appreciated in a number of technical and more or less colloquial expressions that are still widely used among miners and scientists. I argue that, far from being just vestigial traits in an otherwise “evolved” narrative of nature, such words betray the presence of unexplored patterns in the way our perception of natural exploitability and renewability developed. The roots of these patterns can be traced back to the Renaissance, and still affect our understanding of geological phenomena and natural resources. By focusing on a wide array of case studies from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and relying on 1) the new interdisciplinary knowledge and skills I will acquire and 2) my experience in the fields of early modern natural philosophy, environmental history, anthropocene studies, experimental history of science, and digital humanities, I intend to explore the concept of early modern geological agency from a peculiar and still largely neglected, yet extremely promising point of view, offering new paradigms for a more transdisciplinary, historically contextualized, and effective understanding of the intertwined human-environment system.

Planned Start date	Planned End date
1 st September 2021	14 th September 2024

PARTNERSHIP:

1 John Hopkins University	Baltimore (USA)	Coordinator
2 Università Ca' Foscari Venezia	Venice (IT)	Partner