

**Research program:**  
***“The spread of the experimental philosophy in Italy: the Royal Society and the case of the Venetian Republic between the late seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century”***

**Annex C**

**Department of Human and Social Sciences**

**Tutor: Prof. Franco Giudice**

**Description**

The research will focus on the relations between some of the most important fellows of the Royal Society of London and the founders and members of the scientific circles which appeared on the Venetian Republic intellectual scene between the late seventeenth century and the early decades of the eighteenth century. It will deal with the spread in the Venetian context of the experimental investigations pursued by English scientists (such as Robert Boyle, Thomas Willis, Robert Hooke and Richard Lower), aiming at improving our understanding of the Italian scientific debate during the transitional period from the so-called ‘scientific revolution’ to the Enlightenment. As far as the links between the Royal Society and Italy are concerned, some previous researches have been mainly focused on the lukewarm reception in the English context received by the Accademia del Cimento’s experimental investigations, while others have stressed the enthusiastic one given to Marcello Malpighi’s work. However, there is historical evidence of a further dimension of the relationship between the Royal Society and Italy in the late seventeenth century that cries out for fuller attention than hitherto. It concerns the increasing interest showed by some Italian natural philosophers, physicians and virtuosi towards the so-called ‘new experimental philosophy’ and its institutional context. In this respect, the Venetian context could offer several instances, from the short-lived scientific circles which were founded in the late seventeenth-century, such as Paolo and Ambrogio Sarotti’s Accademia Sarotti, to later developments occurred at the Paduan Studio in the early eighteenth century.

**Structure**

The research will be divided into three parts, each one devoted to collect and examine documentary evidence of the reciprocal exchanges between the English scientific context and the Venetian one:

1. The first part (five months) will be dedicated to a detailed investigation to determine exactly the contacts between the fellows of English the scientific society and the Venetian context. It aims at collecting adequate historical evidence of such relations both from secondary literature and from published and unpublished primary sources. Particular attention should be paid to the correspondence of the first secretary of the Royal Society, Henry Oldenburg, to the works and correspondence of Robert Boyle, and to the unpublished papers of John Finch. This stage will also require access to manuscript material held at English and Italian libraries and archives (Leicester Record Office, Leicester; National Archives, British Library, Royal Society Library, London; Bodleian Library, Oxford; Fondo Viale, Università di Padova; Biblioteca Marciana, Venezia; Museo Correr, Venezia; Fondo Bianchini, Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona; Archivio di Stato, Venezia; Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze).
2. The second part (two months) will focus on the informal scientific societies founded in the Venetian Republic during the 1670s and 1680s. Starting from previous findings, this part will

explore a) the links between Robert Boyle and the virtuoso Giovanni Ambrogio Sarotti, Particular attention should be paid to the experimental investigations carried out by the members of the Accademia Sarotti b) the echoes of the earlier English debate over Galenic and chemical medicine in the later conflict between the Accademia degli Aletofili and the Collegio Medico of Verona; c) Francesco Bianchini's researches on vacuum and the properties of air; d) the experimental activity carried out by Boyle's former assistant Denis Papin during his Venetian stay.

3. The third part (three months) will deal with the reception of the experimental philosophy by some prominent figures of the Paduan Studio during the last two decades of the seventeenth-century and the early eighteenth century. The research will assess the impact of the English science on the scientific investigations pursued by some professors of the Studio, from Giacomo Pighi to Giovanni Poleni. Particular attention will be devoted to the study of Fondo Viale, which comprises many works on chemistry, physiology, anatomy, botany and natural history by English scientists such as Hooke, Boyle, Willis, Lower e Neremiah Grew. The remaining amount of time (two months) will be devoted to analyze the results of the research and presenting them in at least one paper to be published in international journals.