**Research Project**

**for the International Center for Spinoza Studies SIVE NATURA**

**Alma Mater Studiorum**

**University of Bologna**

Presented by Mériam Korichi

It is on the invitation of Lorenzo Vinciguerra, director of the International Center for Spinoza Studies SIVE NATURA, that I have the pleasure and honor to apply for Visiting Researcher Fellowship granted by University of Bologna Alma Mater Studiorum.

**First**, the visiting research period would be dedicated to completing the research and the writing I am currently dedicated to, after two years of research. I am researching and writing a book on what is now known as the Vatican Manuscript of Spinoza’s *Ethics*, the sole and only manuscript authorized by the author (though not autograph) of Spinoz’as major work known to this day. It was discovered in the Vatican Library by Leen Spruit (Radbound University, Netherlands) in 2010, after the seminal and decisive long years researches conducted by Pina Totaro (La Sapienza, Rome). The book follows the steps of mathematician and philosopher (mostly in the sense of natural philosopher) Ehrinfreid Walther von Tschirnhaus, who left Amsterdam for a Grand Tour of Europe with the manuscript of the *Ethics* in the spring of the year 1675, while Spinoza was still expecting to see his work published the following month of July. Von Tschirnhaus visited and sojourned in London, Paris, Lyon, Florence until he reached Rome in April 1677, after Spinoza’s death. He remained in possession of the manuscript throughout all his travels until he met several times in Rome with Niccolo Stenone, a Danish eminent natural philosopher who converted to Catholicism and devoted himself to fight against the highly contagious and perilous philosophy of Spinoza who appeared then as the forefront of the New Philosophy in his eyes. Von Tschirnhaus gave the manuscript to Stenone in Rome during the summer 1677. The former stayed in Rome several months more, the latter deposited in September 1677 first a denunciation of the philosophy of Spinoza to the Congregation of the Index and the manuscript to have it listed on the Index of the forbidden books, just before leaving Rome to Hanover where he was to start his new counter-reform mission appointed twice by the Pope Vicar Apostolic of Nordic Missions in Germany (August 21, 1677) and Bishop of Titopolis (September 13, 1677), Hanover where he was to join Leibniz, then the librarian of the duke of Frederick, a convert to Catholicism from Lutheranism. The process of the actual inscription on the Index took several years.

The book documents and inquires about the historical facts sketched above and questions the reasons of the persons involved, to give reflective depths to rich historical circumstances extraordinarily instructive and evocative with all the links made visible by the travel of the manuscript from Amsterdam, 1675, to Rome, September 1677. In a way, this book, following von Tschirnhaus’s steps and activities, while in possession of a highly inflammable manuscript at the time, aims at “dis-historicize” History to give a present perspective and grasp on the matters involved unveiled at a period when the boundaries between mechanics, physics, natural philosophy, philosophy were imprecise, the ambitions of the former being able to coincide with the ambitions of the latter as the eminent example of Leibniz shows. But this time is also key to understand the actual process of the narrowing of the meaning of the concept of *Science* since it wasthe moment when the opposition between “experimentalism” and “systematicism”, on the backdrop of religious and theological crispation, got stronger and stronger, especially on the side of the ”experimentators” rejecting the tyranny of theoretical dogmaticism, but also on the side of the “calculators” who, during those years were achieving Galileo’s program in London and in Paris. A captive meaning of what is “science” appears then at stake in the analysis.

Conducting the final researches and completion for this work in the International Center for the Spinoza Studies, after visiting the Vatican Library, the Amsterdam University and Library, would be a fantastic fruitful opportunity to enrich the book’s perspectives with the conversations that would arise with the Spinoza’s scholars and students within the Philosophy Department of Bologna’s University.

**Second**, as Lorenzo Vinceguerra’s intends to dedicate his 2023 spring series of seminars to Leibniz, it is the opportunity to present some aspects of my work and research during his seminars as Von Tschirnhaus met Leibniz in Paris as early as the end of summer of the year 1675 and developed with him a lifelong scholar relationship. Von Tschirnhaus, in possession of Spinoza’s *Ethics* in Paris, played indeed a crucial role to acquaint Leibniz with the principles of Spinoza’s philosophy, which had a serious impact on the formation of Leibniz’s early metaphysics. While the latter resisted Spinoza’s necessitarianism and immanentism, the former questioned Leibniz’s conception of perfection. It would be a great opportunity and a privilege to conduct seminars on those topics to students of the Philosophy Department of Bologna University.

Paris, November 30, 2022

Mériam Korichi