**Call for papers**

**Call for papers “From the asylum of freedom to the right of asylum, Italy-Europe 14th-19th century”, Venice, Ca’ Foscari University, Thursday-Friday 28-29 March 2019**

The French revolution generated waves of mass migration to several European countries. “Emigrants”, as they were called, came to seek asylum, shaping a geography of reception cities and thus establishing locations offering “the asylum of freedom”. At or around the same time, on 24 June 1793, the Montagnard Constitution of the First Republic enshrined asylum in its Article 120, transforming it into a genuine right: the French people, according to the Article, “*provide asylum to foreigners banished from their native country on account of liberty*. *They refuse it to tyrants.*” As we well know, this generous piece of legislation did not last long. However, its ephemeral nature does not overshadow the fact that this was an unforeseen legal subject matter. For the first time in European history, a right to asylum was officially offered to individuals being persecuted for political or religious reasons. It established a long-lasting right for these individuals, but also a duty of protection as we understand it today: “*a duty to protect individuals under threat in their country, a right to remain in the country and to dignified reception conditions for the entire period during which their file is examined*.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Yet, the notion “right of asylum” referred, in the modern period, to an entirely different legal reality. During the Middle Ages, and continuing through to the 18th century, it was a right of immunity offered temporarily to a fleeing delinquent or criminal having found refuge in a church or in a location offering a secular right of asylum. The many religious migrations that started in the 16th century, with the fracture of the French Reformation, caused the term “asylum” to be redefined to be applied to individuals persecuted due to their faith. This transition from the medieval right of asylum to our modern right of asylum will be at the heart of this conference.

This conference will be centred around the three following areas of focus:

* The first on the tradition of the medieval right of asylum, its continuity and its transformations throughout the modern period. It will examine the many discussions that it fuelled both in Rome where it was subject to much controversy between canonists, and in the high courts of the French, Dutch, Swiss, English or German justice systems, and particularly within the Imperial Aulic Council (*Reichshofrat*), a tribunal which specifically handled cases relating to the Emperor’s prerogatives. Attention will be paid to the notion of ecclesiastical immunity and to the discussions that this notion generated when the Church’s vision clashed with that of political authorities as regards sacred places or those deemed inviolable. In fact, secular authorities progressively grew to condemn the immunities from which other categories benefitted and which were not limited to Catholics alone.
* The second area of focus will touch on asylum and refuge practices as they developed starting in the 16th century, following the religious conflicts that ripped Europe apart. We will cover religious groups as varied as protestants of all persuasions (Lutherans, Bohemian Brethren, French Huguenots, Waldesians, Orange Order, etc.), Jews and Catholics, of English and Irish nationality in particular. We will examine these types of refuge in light of those already practiced during the Middle Ages by certain heretical groups. We will also consider later asylum practices, both religious and political (Jacobites, Orangemen, revolutionary migrations and those carried out in the name of freedom, etc.), from the end of the 17th century to the mid-19th century, without neglecting cultural and economic aspects (writers feeling uncomfortable in their native country and seeking more suitable areas to practice their profession, protectors, shelter, etc.).
* The third area of focus will relate to asylum languages and the establishment of both a political and symbolic geography “of freedom”. How did reception countries become, as from the 17th century and especially in the 18th century, the home of an intense intellectual output enabling the emergence of the concepts of freedom of conscience and tolerance as demonstrated by Hubert Bost’s works[[2]](#footnote-2)? How did the image of an “asylum of freedom” take form, both in theory and in fiction through libertine literature starting in the 17th century, and how did it simultaneously cause the creation of an actual European geography of places of asylum between the 17th and 19th century? Outside of North America, this perception of space applied both to cities (Venice, Geneva, Paris, London, Brussels, Amsterdam) and to countries (Prussia, Dutch Republic, England, etc.). These were regarded, in the long-term, albeit with variations, as reception places guaranteeing foreign individuals a freedom that they did not benefit from in their place of origin.

This conference will take place at the Ca’ Foscari University of Venice. It is part of the École Française de Rome’s 2017-2021 five-year programme *Administrer l’étranger. Mobilités, diplomaties et hospitalité, Italie - Europe (XIVe-mi XIXe siècle) (Foreign management. Mobility, Diplomacy and Hospitality, Italy-Europe (14th - mid-19th century)*, led by the Grenoble Alpes University (LUHCIE), the Paris Est Créteil University (CRHEC) and Paris Panthéon Sorbonne University (IHMC).

<http://luhcie.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/programmes-de-recherche/#Administrer>

<http://www.efrome.it/la-recherche/programmes/programmes-scientifiques-2017-2021/adminetr.html>

Paper proposals of approximately 500 words accompanied by a short bio-bibliography (5 to 10 lines) should be sent to the organisers **by 5 November 2018**: [infelise@unive.it](mailto:infelise@unive.it), [gilles.bertrand@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:gilles.bertrand@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr) and [naima.ghermani@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr](mailto:naima.ghermani@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)

**Conference organised by Mario Infelise (Ca’ Foscari, Venice) Gilles Bertrand and Naïma Ghermani (Grenoble Alpes University LUHCIE) in collaboration with the École Française de Rome and the other members of the steering committee.**

1. French Ministry of the Interior Website. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hubert Bost, *Ces messieurs de la R.P.R. Histoires et écritures de huguenots, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècle (The Gentlemen of the RPR. History and writings of the Huguenots, 17th-18th century)*, Paris, H. Champion, 2001, and in particular Chapter 12 « Le Refuge huguenot, un laboratoire de la tolérance ? » (“The Huguenot refuge, a laboratory of tolerance?”) p. 302-323. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)