

Call for papers

***Hospitality and social and political regulation in
Mediterranean Antiquity:
individuals versus community***

*International Conference
Lyon, École normale supérieure
5th-7th September 2018*



Defined as a “moral obligation beyond any family laws” (ALBANEL 2016), the unconditional hospitality conceptualised by Derrida is currently under scrutiny by historians. One of the major reflections on this social rule developed by Derrida highlights the contradiction between the laws and what the author calls the Hospitality Law (DERRIDA 1997). The laws manage, regulate and potentially limit the welcoming of foreigners to the group and the city; on the contrary, the Hospitality Law places this welcoming as a categorical and universal imperative.

However, following Y.-C. Zarka's analysis of the traditions of hospitality (ZARKA 2016), this concept seems deeply related to the nature of the relationship with the foreigner and to the conditions of the welcoming. This conference aims at understanding the different aspects of Hospitality whether applied at an individual or at a community level. Focusing on the concept of Hospitality as a social and political way to regulate individuals, groups and communities, some fifteen years after the seminal conference *Les régulations sociales dans l'Antiquité* (Angers, 23th-24th May 2003 ; MOLIN 2006), this conference will investigate this central role in the context of the Mediterranean Antiquity.

In the Mediterranean Antiquity, Hospitality, conceptualised and regulated, appears as a social and political way to control the integration or rejection of an individual or a group considered as non-indigenous vis a vis a family, a community, a

City or an Empire. During the Archaic Period, the Latin word *hospes* refers to the host as a representative of the *hostis*, a specific foreigner whose protection by a welcoming host confers special rights within the Roman City (BENVENISTE 1969). According to this etymology, Hospitality seems to be an embedded social rule during Antiquity. Regarding the evolution of the meaning of *hospes* through the ages, it appears that this word designates progressively both partners involved in the hospitality relationship while the term *hostis* refers to the enemy. This reveals the ambiguity of the status of the foreigner, of the other, sometimes feared and fought against, sometimes welcomed in the Roman City.

The current migrant crisis in the Mediterranean area places the concept of hospitality at the heart of contemporary social and political debate (BOUDOU 2017). In this context, it is genuinely important to historicise this role of hospitality as a way to construct otherness, to reflect and analyse the ancient roots of this socialised and politicised relationship with the foreigner, sometimes considered to be a prototype of policy of Foreign Affairs in the Mediterranean Antiquity. Communications should focus on the nature and the scales of the social and political relationships engendered by the confrontation of the Self and the Other during a situation of Hospitality (in the context of the ancient Mediterranean) : force, constraint, negotiation, selection , relegation, integration, unconditional welcome ... Communications will also try to differentiate Hospitality from other forms of reception (punctual, commercial, etc.). They should not examine in a "disconnected" way the different stages of the Hospitality sequence, for example from the very first contact to the crossing of the threshold, from the exchange of gifts to the common meal (VAN GENNEP 1969, REECE 1993). The aim is to understand how Hospitality rules or standards can determine an individual or a group to act in a pragmatic or concerted manner when a stranger arrived, especially since the other / the others is/ are factors of restructuration, and potentially of risk, for the welcoming host / hosts and his /their community of belonging. We will explore the practices implemented during this regulation process (in terms of temporalities, spaces, actors ...), underlining, if need be, the singularity or the exceptional character (real or apparent) of certain individual or collective behavior with regard to uses dictated by tradition, religion, law, social standards, etc. The point of view of the hosts greeted (the guests) should also be taken into account, considering the way in which they submit, voluntarily or not, or oppose themselves to the regulation implied by hospitality in order to integrate the welcoming community. How could Hospitality intervene to complement, to replace or to compete with other devices of social and political aggregation (human rights, asylum, marriage, etc.)? These different questions will have to be considered from an individual as well as a collective point of view. This distinction may not be that clear in the context of ancient societies for which the notion and the conception of the "individual" blur our concepts. However, in Antiquity, Hospitality is sometimes personalized, if not individualized, as the well-known case of the proxene in the Greek world shows.

These lines of thought must be considered in all the regional, cultural and chronological diversity of the Mediterranean area, which will be envisaged over the long

time and on the widest possible scale. While Greek and Roman societies will play an important role in the debates, we will be attentive to proposals for other cultural contexts. Multi-cultural societies will constitute particularly stimulating cases of study. In comparison with an approach developed for other types of social relations in Antiquity (such as the Cambridge Group, which postulated in the 1960s the existence of a model of a pre-modern Mediterranean family), this survey will be the occasion to question ever more the existence of a "Mediterranean model" of the ancient hospitality, in line with the works of F. Braudel on the Mediterranean, of which the last twenty years have inspired the *Mediterranean studies*. Several themes can be privileged, always in relation to hospitality as a mechanism for social and / or political regulation in Mediterranean Antiquity:

- collective practices and private initiatives
- "public" sphere, "private" sphere
- individual, family, group, community, state
- social and / or political regulation, crisis (s) and recomposition of ancient societies
- standard (s), code, law, tradition

*Proposals are to be submitted before **March 1st 2018** to **projet.hospitam@gmail.com** (abstract of no more than 250 words and brief CV). Results of the selection process will be communicated in early April.*

*Presentations should be no more than **20 minutes** in length. Conference languages are **French, English and Italian**.*

Conference Organisation: Claire FAUCHON-CLAUDON (ENS de Lyon - HiSoMA) et Marie-Adeline LE GUENNEC (EFR - HiSoMA)

Comité scientifique : Richard BOUCHON (Université Lyon 2) ; Bernadette CABOURET-LAURIoux (Université Lyon 3) ; Véronique CHANKOWSKI (Université Lyon 2) ; Cristina CORSI (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale, Italie) ; Eleonora DESTEFANIS (Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale, Italie) ; Claire FAUCHON-CLAUDON (ENS de Lyon) ; Marie-Adeline LE GUENNEC (École française de Rome)

Contact : claire.fauchon@ens-lyon.fr ; leguennec.marieadeline@gmail.com

References

- V. ALBANEL, Pour une hospitalité citoyenne, *Études*, 12, 2016, p. 41-50.
É. BENVENISTE, *Le vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, Paris, 1969 (Le Sens commun).
B. BOUDOU, *Politique de l'hospitalité : une généalogie conceptuelle*, Paris, 2017.
J. DERRIDA, A. Dufourmantelle, *De l'hospitalité*, Paris, 1997 (Petite bibliothèque des idées).
M. MOLIN (éd.), *Les régulations sociales dans l'Antiquité: actes du colloque d'Angers, 23 et 24 mai 2003*, Rennes, 2006 (Histoire - Rennes).
S. REECE, *The Stranger's Welcome : Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene*, Ann Arbor, 1993 (Michigan monographs in classical Antiquity).
A. VAN GENNEP, *Les rites de passage: étude systématique des rites de la porte et du seuil, de l'hospitalité, de l'adoption, de la grossesse et de l'accouchement, de la naissance, de l'enfance...*, Paris, 1969.
Y.- Ch. ZARKA, Penser l'hospitalité aujourd'hui, *Cités*, 68, 4, 2016, p. 3-8.