

Abstract Maud Harivel, Institute of History, University of Berne :

Political Corruption in Venice from 1500 to 1700.

Within the framework of a research project about political corruption, two city-states will be compared during the early modern period. While my research workmate will be studying Bern, I concentrate on election procedures and accusations of political manipulation in Venice. The aim of our research is to clarify the concept of political corruption during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Focusing on such a large period should show us the evolution of the definition of political corruption and through this definition, we will be able to explain how Venetian patricians perceived political deviance. In Venice, the tentative to influence elections was called *broglio* after the name of a place near San Marco where patricians met before entering the Major Council. The word includes all kind of practices concerning political influence like feasts between patricians, godparenthood, exchange of voices, but also gifts or promises of money and illegal oaths to favour someone. Different sources will be used and compared together: laws regulating elections, trials against corruption, diaries of contemporaries, historical chronicles and political writings from Venetians and foreigners. The final result should help us to distinguish between tolerated and illegal practices of the *broglio*, and between efficient and fruitless measures against it.

Furthermore, the dissertation on Venice aims at interpreting the paintings of the Council of Ten, a powerful institution whose main competence was to control and punish every kind of deviant behavior from the nobles. The decoration of their rooms in the palace of doges celebrates first the magnificence and the power of the *Serenissima*, and second, the competences of the Council of Ten. One major theme is the victory of virtues on vices, which records the objective of anti-corruption laws: to stop all kind of “pernicious” practices which hurt the “distributive justice”, guarantee of the Republic’s integrity.