



Workshop
**Freedom of the seas and freedom of the individual:
a historical appraisal**

School of Oriental and African Studies University of London
7 February 2025

Programme

The Workshop “Freedom of the seas and freedom of the individual: a historical appraisal” is part of the research project on “Freedom of the seas and human rights protection”, lead by Professor Irini Papanicolopulu at SOAS University of London. The Workshop marks the conclusion of the first stage of the research project, which had as its aim to trace and critically assess the interaction between the genesis and development of the principle of freedom of the seas and its impact on people, including legacy of colonial domination and the slave trade.

The Workshop will bring together historians and lawyers to further explore and debate the relationship between freedom of the seas, as a concept and as a legal principle, and freedom of persons in a historical perspective, focusing on the XV-XIX centuries.

The Workshop is entirely funded by the British Academy and all participants take part in their personal capacity.

Participants

- Dr Stefano Cattelan
- Professor Gina Heathcote
- Dr Ki-Won Hong
- Dr Abid Hussain
- Professor Hassan Khalilieh
- Dr Andrea Longo
- Professor Renisa Mawani (TBC)
- Professor Irini Papanicolopulu
- Dr Matilde Rocca
- Dr Mikki Stelder
- Professor Mark Somos
- Dr Martine Van Ittersum
- Dr David Wilson

Timetable

- 11.30-11.45: Welcome and introduction (Irina Papanicolopulu)
- 11.45-12.15: 'Regulating waterways and controlling maritime mobilities in the early modern world, c. 1500-1800' by David Wilson
Discussant: Renisa Mawani
- 12.15-12.45: 'Freedom of the Seas in the Age of Piracy: Exploring the Role of Piracy in Shaping and Challenging the Legal Principles of Maritime Freedom' by Abid Hussain
Discussant: Hassan Khalilieh
- 12.45-13.45: Lunch break (lunch to be served in the meeting room)
- 13.45-14.15: 'The freedom of the sea beyond Grotius' Mare liberum: the case of the Austrian Law Countries and the Ostend Company (c. 1700-1731)' by Stefano Cattelan
Discussant: Martine Van Ittersum
- 14.15-14.45: 'Understanding Freedom of the Seas before Grotius: an analysis of contributions by Rodrigo Suarez, Francisco de Vitoria, Vazquez de Menchaca and Alberico Gentili on Freedom of the Seas' by Andrea Longo
Discussant: Mark Somos
- 14.45-15.15: 'Ocean as Perpetual Res Nullius' by Mikki Stelder
Discussant: Irini Papanicolopulu
- 15.15-15.45: 'Fernando Vázquez de Menchaca's Natural Law Theory on the Rights of the Individual and the Freedom of the Seas: Used by Spanish Monarchs for Imperialist Purposes' by Ki-Won Hong
Discussant: Irini Papanicolopulu
- 15.45-16.15: Coffee break
- 16.15-17.45: Roundtable discussion
- 17.45-18.00: Conclusion