

Prix François Guizot-Institut de France Prize  
Speech by Stéphane Coste  
President of the François Guizot Association  
October 8, 2018

Mr. Chancellor,  
Honorary Chancellor,  
Mr. Perpetual Secretary,  
Mr. Chairman of the jury,  
Members of the jury of the François Guizot Prize - Institut de France,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Dear friends,  
Dear Laureate,

This third edition of the François Guizot-Institut de France Prize is a great event for the members of our association and for the descendants of François Guizot.

I would like to warmly thank Xavier Darcos, Chancellor of the Institute, for welcoming us this evening to the Institute's premises, where Guizot was often present.

I would also like to thank the President of the Jury, Jean-Claude Casanova, and the members of the Jury for their in-depth work, which made it possible to award Olivier Grenouilleau's book *La révolution abolitionniste* this year.

Olivier Grenouilleau, you are the third winner of the Prix François Guizot-Institut de France for your book and I congratulate you.

The theme of the abolition of slavery was completely contemporary with the time of Guizot and it was a subject in which he was personally involved.

On the one hand, Guizot, like Louis-Philippe, was an influential member of the *Société de la morale chrétienne* (Society of Christian Morality), which was at the forefront of the fight against the slave trade.

On the other hand, Guizot was also concerned by this subject for family

reasons. His cousin Louis Guizot (1740-1794) was a mulatto whose father, Paul Guizot, had gone to make his fortune in Santo Domingo and whose mother was a black slave named Catherine Rideau. Louis Guizot had been elected the first black mayor of a village in France, that of Saint-Geniès-de-Malgoirès in the Gard. A Gironde follower, he was guillotined during the Revolution only a few days after his cousin André, the father of François Guizot.

The July monarchy, which was heavily involved in the fight against slavery, and stopped the slave trade in 1831. After long negotiations in which Guizot participated, an international agreement was signed in London in 1845 to control the slave trade.

Louis-Philippe and successive governments did not abolish slavery, but they did pave the way for Victor Schoelcher's decisive action in 1848. The introduction of numerous decrees, laws and ordinances improving the status of slaves had helped to prepare minds for abolition.

I would like to make a brief detour to the other side of the Atlantic and especially to the main parties concerned, namely the slaves themselves. Colson Whitehead's recent Pulitzer-Prize winning book *The Underground Railroad*, describes the living conditions of the slaves and makes it possible to fully justify a posteriori the difficult abolitionist struggle that Olivier Grenouilleau brilliantly recounts in his book which is being awarded this evening.

We are gathered around Olivier Grenouilleau to present him with the François Guizot-Institut de France prize. This prize represents an essential aspect of our association in favor of Guizot's memory in the past years.

François Guizot was an exceptional man who was one of the most influential figures of the 19th century in France, a status incongruous with his relative obscurity today. His impressive intelligence and his great culture allowed him to play direct and indirect roles throughout his life. We have difficulty imagining such important personalities these days playing such significant roles over a long period of time. Guizot was even a member of three of the Academies of the Institut de France, which is in itself a symbol of his achievements.

In addition to the Prix Guizot-Institut de France that we are celebrating today,

our association is developing other actions to provide a better knowledge about François Guizot and his immense intellectual and cultural heritage, which he enriched and shared throughout his long life.

The website [www.guizot.com](http://www.guizot.com) brings together all the elements of his life and work. It is constantly evolving to take into account new books and research on Guizot and his family.

In this spirit, we have launched a project to resume the transcription of the letters exchanged between François Guizot and Princess Dorothee de Lieven. These documents are being put on a digital platform produced by the CNRS and the ENS in order to make them accessible to researchers who wish to deepen their knowledge of European diplomatic relations in the mid-19th century. The sharing of this important document base will primarily take place through the [www.guizot.com](http://www.guizot.com) website.

On October 30, 2018 at 9 p.m., France 2 will broadcast a program on Louis Philippe as part of its "Secrets d'Histoire" series. Within it an important sequence will be dedicated to François Guizot, this was filmed at Val Richer, Guizot's property in the Calvados in the presence of Laurent Theis.

The greater the access to Guizot's works, the greater his family, historians and the larger public will benefit. This remains our sole objective.