

Journées d'études / Workshop

# L'Islam aux vents des îles *Island Islam*



Aix-Marseille Université  
Campus Saint-Charles

**26 et 27 juin 2017**

Aix\*Marseille  
université

Centre de Recherche et  
de Documentation  
sur l'Océanie



Maison Asie Pacifique

## Journées d'études / Workshop

# L'Islam aux vents des îles – Island Islam

Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur l'Océanie, CREDO  
Maison Asie Pacifique - Aix Marseille Université

**26 et 27 juin 2017**

Lundi 26/06		Modérateurs	Intervenants	Titre
Accueil des participants	9h00		CREDO – Bâtiment 15 – 2 <sup>e</sup> étage	
Salle LSH 412 Bâtiment 15	9h30		Présentation du workshop Lorenzo Brutti	
Salle visioconférence	10h00	Serge Tcherkézoff  Lorenzo Brutti	Debra Mac Dougall	Islam, Christianity, ancestors, and others? Religious pluralism in the contemporary Pacific
	11h00		Jaap Timmer	West Papua: Christian Theocracies and Islamic Secularities
Salle LSH 412 Bâtiment 15	14h15	Serge Tcherkézoff  Lorenzo Brutti	Rainer Bushmann	Islam in the Historical Borderlands of the Pacific and the Indian Oceans
Coffee break	15h15		Scott Flower	Islam in Papua New Guinea: Religious and Cultural Change
Salle LSH 412 Bâtiment 15	15h45		Melica Ouennoughi	La diffusion de l'Islam en Nouvelle-Calédonie
	16h45		Emmanuelle Crane	Networks and media coverage of Islam & Muslims in Samoa & French Polynesia
Mardi 27/06				
Salle LSH 412 Bâtiment 15	10h00	Lorenzo Brutti	Thorgeir Kolshus	A singular character. The sorcery of Osama bin Laden
Coffee break	11h00			
Salle LSH 412 Bâtiment 15	11h30		Marc Tabani	Man Abraham, Man Skul, Man Muslam : Tannese representations of the peoples of the Book
Clôture	12h30			Discussion générale

## Participants : titres et résumés des présentations

Scott Flower (Global Centre of Research and Engagement)

### **Islam in Papua New Guinea: Religious and Cultural Change**

This paper provides a historical and ethnographic analysis of the establishment and growth of Islam in Papua New Guinea (PNG). The data used includes archival records from the Islamic society of Papua New Guinea and over 100 interviews with PNG Muslim converts. The paper explores the causes and patterns of religious conversion to Islam by indigenous PNG citizens and what religious change might mean for the country and the wider Pacific region.

Debra McDougall (University of Western Australia)

### **Islam, Christianity, ancestors, and others? Religious pluralism in the contemporary Pacific**

Though small in number, Pacific Islander Muslims and other non-Christians pose a challenge to local ideas of indigenised Christianity as the basis for national and community identity. They also challenge well-established anthropological approaches to the anthropology of Christianity in the region and beyond. Like so many others in the world, contemporary Pacific Island Muslims seem to be religious ancestors to questions about where they belong in a rapidly changing world, sometimes looking back to a culturally distinctive ancestral past and sometimes to a cosmopolitan world where cultural difference is no barrier to unity.

Jaap Timmer (Macquarie University)

### **West Papua: Christian Theocracies and Islamic Secularities**

West Papua is above all differently situated re Islam than all other Pacific regions because it is a Christian margin in a Muslim-majority nation. Interestingly, the kind of institutionalistic/legalistic use of religion is more prominent among Christian Papuans than among Muslim Papuans. For the non-Papuan migrants in Papua, Islam and Christianity are often rather different matters but not unconnected to the religious dynamics among Papuans.

In other words, West Papua could feature as a case for challenging common assumptions about Islam and Christianity and their relationship to the state. What I can offer is a written overview of Islam in West Papua and an elaboration (in relation to the anthropology of religion) of the points above.

Rainer Buschmann (Channel Islands University)

### **"Islam in the Historical Borderlands of the Pacific and the Indian Oceans"**

Although many world historians like to draw distinctive boundaries separating the Indian from the Pacific oceans, human ingenuity has transcended such postulated divides for centuries. The paper will highlight the trade networks emerging out of Island Southeast Asia since the fourteenth century and investigate their peripheral reaches into New Guinea and Australia. While the study initiates with a delineation of trade circuits and the coveted resources found in Oceania, I will place particular emphasis on cultural heritage, most specifically traces of Islam, that have impacted the region.

Thorgeir Kolshus (University of Oslo)

### **A singular character. The sorcery of Osama bin Laden**

In the aftermath of 9/11, FBI's 'Wanted'-posters featuring Osama bin Laden in various guises were spread across the globe, even reaching the wall of the Post Office of Sola, the capitol of Vanuatu's northern most Torba province. To people on the island of Mota, these images of the man behind the attack on what since WWII had been the impervious Americans soon turned into a narrative of his shape-shifting capacities.

This was in its turn linked both to the abilities of the sorcerers of nearby Maewo and to John Woo's 1997 film Face/Off, featuring John Travolta changing faces with the comatose villain Nicholas Cage in order to avert a terrorist attack, which somebody had watched during a visit to the nearest town. His skills were also compared to those of the ordained Anglican clergy and the members of the Melanesian Brotherhood, an indigenous monastic order. A handful had heard that bin Laden's 'Church', logue, was Islam, but apart from the fact that it was present in Fiji, people had few ideas of what it entailed.

In this paper, I discuss how the fascination for Osama bin Laden's capacities and the extraordinary appeal of the story of his ultimate demise speak of the role played by the imaginary in bridging the gaps between different levels of experience, and how the definite, the probable, and the unlikely are negotiated with reference to these levels of experience. I will also discuss the process of coming to terms with a new ideological complex, such as Islam, by means of comparing it to systems with which people are familiar, and juxtapose this to the way the first Anglican missionaries appropriated key terms from the pre-Christian Mota cosmology, such as *mana*, *vui* ("spirit") and *tapu*, in order to convey the essence of the new creed.

Marc Tabani (CNRS-CREDO)

### **Man Abraham, Man Skul, Man Muslam : Tannese representations of the peoples of the Book**

---

My presentation will deal with the recent emergence of Islam in a specific island society. Tanna's religious specificities have been historically molded by the long reign of a "Christian theocracy", followed by a long-lasting political reaction to colonial Christian exclusiveness, in the form of a powerful syncretistic movement largely oriented toward the indigenization of the Old Testament. Reinterpreting millenarian aspects of the New Testament has been encompassed by the faith to a prophetic spiritual figure known as "John Frum". I will examine how in the context of year 2000 fears, 9/11 terror attacks, and Iraq war, people of Tanna has been particularly impressed by their discovery of the "Man Muslam" and his struggle to defend its "kastom". It is not surprising that the first groups that have converted to Islam in Tanna are former and still crypto John Frum followers. How and why the rich syncretistic experience of the Tannese has immediately been applied to Islam will be also part of my observations and comments.

Mélica Ouennoughi (Docteur en anthropologie, chercheuse indépendante)

### **The diffusion of Islam in New Caledonia**

---

First of all, we shall bring the scientific effects on the historic presence of North African in New Caledonia during the 19th century. The inventory of Ined in 1996 doesn't state their origin nor even their religion. Thus they would mainly be Christian or would have no religion. Nevertheless, my first field interviews in 1998 had observed a North Africain religiosity introduced from the construction of a patron saint in 1891 giving birth to a mix various population. My communication will discuss first of all the history hidden from the sufism of Islam, which was present at this time. How the patron saint was able to bypass the anchoring of the dominant colonial christianity, nevertheless solidly anchored indeed in the Pacific. The old custom of the nomads of the former caravansary created a particular religiosity through particular rites recomposed from intangible assets derived from the bush Kanak. Years 68 have being born an association in the locality of the old cemetery, the descent of which organized the customs and the small pilgrimage (mekkam) dedicated to the old of the penal colony. Secondly, we shall pursue towards forms of associative organization of an «Global Islam» more protestant than customary since the 1980s formed by foreign private funds trawling for new recruits, Melanesian, Indonesian, Fidjian, Yemenite but also native saying. Our additional inquiries with the cooperation of the saharan agronomic research emit the hypothesis that old cores of dates (palm) were scattered in Australian aboriginal ground during the end of the 19th century, a gesture ancestral introduced at the origin of the old kanak saying.

Emmanuelle Crane (CELSA/Sorbonne Paris IV)

### **Networks and media coverage of Islam & Muslims in Samoa & French Polynesia**

---

In the mid-1980s, Islamic da'wah organizations were active in the Pacific. According to M. Terdiman, the first native Samoan converted in the mid-1980s (due to the efforts of the WAMY – World Assembly of Muslim Youth – director based in New Zealand) while the Fiji Muslim League helped the small Samoan Muslim community to give Islamic education to its children. Yet, according to the FML, Muslim communities in Tonga and Western Samoa are declining "due to migration and lack of support which caused some of these converts to slowly neglect Islam and to convert back to their old religions or are no longer members of any religion". In neighbouring French Polynesia, anti-mosque demonstrations occurred in 2014 in protest at plans to build Tahiti's first mosque. This paper wishes to address the media coverage of Islam in Samoa and French Polynesia and to explore established religious networks in both countries.