



Call for papers

Pacific "Celts"?
Diasporas, cross-cultural dialogue and revitalized identity

International and interdisciplinary symposium
October 23-24, 2024

**hosted by TROCA research unit, Department of Humanities,
in person at The University of New Caledonia and online**

in partnership with the University of Toulon and the University of Savoie Mont Blanc

The international symposium, to be held on October 23 and 24, 2024 is supported by the research units of the University of New Caledonia (TROCA),¹ the University of Savoie Mont Blanc (LLSETI, EA 3706)² and the University of Toulon (Babel, EA 2649).³ The event, endorsed by the CRECIB (French Centre for British Studies)⁴ and the SOFEIR (French Society for Irish Studies),⁵ is co-organized by Noémie Beck,⁶ Senior Lecturer in British and Irish history, and in Irish mythology and folklore, the University of Savoie Mont Blanc, Visiting Lecturer at the University of New Caledonia since February 2021, and Frédéric Armao, Associate Professor at the University of Toulon.

This international symposium follows on from the international conference organized in November 2021 at the University of Toulon (France) on *Celtic myths and folklores in the English-speaking world*, which resulted in an eponymous publication in December 2022: <https://babel.univ-tln.fr/mythes-et-folklores-celtiques-dans-le-monde-anglophone-2/>. In 2022, the organizers launched a YouTube channel called *Imaginaire celtique*, in collaboration with Gaël Hily (Rennes 2 University), which releases a monthly interview with a specialist in the field, either in English or in French with English subtitles: <https://www.youtube.com/@imaginaireceltique>.

¹ TRajectoires d'OCéAnie: <https://troca.unc.nc/>

² Langages, Littératures, Sociétés. Études Transfrontalières et Internationales: <http://www.llseti.univ-smb.fr/>

³ <http://babel.univ-tln.fr/>

⁴ <https://crecib.wordpress.com/>

⁵ <https://www.sofeir.fr/>

⁶ <https://troca.unc.nc/membres/beck/>, <https://www.llseti.univ-smb.fr/web/llseti/700-beck-noemie.php>

A symposium on the so-called "Celtic" diasporas – i.e. Breton, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Cornish – in the Pacific, bringing together the English- and French-speaking worlds, has not yet been proposed. Research proves that so-called "Celtic" cultures, whether original, reinvented or revitalized, are present in the Pacific – however controversial and protean the term "Celtic" may be. In Australia and New Zealand, certain diasporas (Welsh or Cornish, for example) have maintained their traditions, languages, beliefs and religions while adapting to their new geographical, cultural and political environment. Others have revived, revitalized and even recreated their "Celtic" identity in the tropics, in order to differentiate themselves from the British English colonialists, like their fellow Celtic nations in the British Isles (*Celtic Revival*, *Celtic Nationalism* or *Pan-Celtism* from the second half of the 19th century onwards). In New Caledonia, 371 Breton families chose exile over poverty, settling there in the second half of the 19th century. The same was true for a number of Irish, Scottish and Welsh immigrants, for whom New Caledonia was a second or even third stop after Australia or New Zealand.

This interdisciplinary and diachronic symposium aims to bring together historians, geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, linguists, literary scholars, historians of religion, ethnomusicologists, mythologists and folklorists, etc., to discuss themes such as migration, connections, cultural and ethnic blending, languages, religions, continuity, creation and revitalization of identities and cultures, customs, festivals, Neopaganism, memory(-ies), oral literature, and oral history, etc. This symposium will analyze the diversity and the historical, cultural, linguistic and identity-related richness of these so-called "Celtic" diasporas, and question "Celtic" identities in the Pacific. It will also highlight the cultural and ethnic blending between these diasporic communities and indigenous peoples, such as the Irish-Australian Aborigines, or in New Caledonia, where certain tribes may have mixed Kanak and Irish origins.

Proposals (French or English) should include an abstract of up to 300 words accompanied by a brief bibliography, and a biography of up to 100 words. They should be sent before March 15, 2024 to the following two addresses: Noémie Beck (noemie.beck@unc.nc) and Frédéric Armao (armao@univ-tln.fr).

Papers will be of 20 minutes' duration followed by 10 minutes' question time. It is intended that a subsequent publication will include a number of papers from the symposium.

Conference venue: The University of New Caledonia, Avenue James Cook, Nouméa, New Caledonia.

Keynote speakers:

Malcolm CAMPBELL is Professor of History at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, where he teaches Irish and Australian history and the history of empire. A graduate of the University of New South Wales, he has published widely on the history of Irish emigration and settlement in North America, Australia, New Zealand, and the Pacific. His most recent book is the transnational study *Ireland's Farthest Shores: Mobility, Migration, and Settlement in the Pacific World*, published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 2022.

Paula KEHOE is an independent filmmaker and writer making creative documentaries, TV series, docu-dramas and immersive media. She will present her 2013 documentary *An Dubh ina Gheal: Assimilation*, winner of the Radharc Award 2014, featuring Kev Carmody, Gary Foley, Ann McGrath, Bill Brock-Byrne, Henry Reynolds, Shane Howard, Len and Brett Clarke, Pat O'Shane, Michael Long⁷. This film explores the complex relationship between Aborigines

⁷ <https://paulamkehoe.com/#/an-dubh-ina-gheal-assimilation/>

and the Irish in Australia. At the heart of this exploration is the story of the Stolen Generations, and an Aboriginal resistance led by 'Shamrock Aborigines', who saw theirs as a shared struggle against a common oppressor.

Frédéric ARMAO is Associate Professor at the University of Toulon (France).⁸ He specializes in the Celtic world and is mainly interested in the "Celtic imaginary", specifically through the study of the calendar festivals in the folklore and mythology of Ireland. In 2023, he published *Uisneach or the Center of Ireland* (Routledge), with a preface by Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland. He co-created the YouTube channel *Imaginaire celtique*.

Please note: meals (coffee breaks and lunches) are provided by TROCA, LLSETI and Babel research units. Accommodation and travel expenses are the responsibility of your research unit or university. Even though priority will be given to face-to-face sessions, online sessions will take place in the early evening Nouméa time, to facilitate international participation, and will be projected in the Conference room for those attending in person.

⁸ <https://babel.univ-tln.fr/armao-frederic/>