

Nantes Institute for Advanced Study is supported by:

Nantes Métropole
Veolia Eau
Réseau Français des Instituts d'Etudes Avancées – RFIEA
Région Pays de la Loire
Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche
Université de Nantes
Secrétariat d'Etat à la formation, à la recherche et à l'innovation de la Confédération suisse
Suez Environnement
Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Formation Professionnelle
Investissement d'avenir (Labex RFIEA+)
Programme Eurias (cofinancé par la Commission européenne)
Organisation Internationale du Travail – OIT

Conference

Contemporary Memories of slave trade and slavery in the arab world

Tuesday 6 May 2014

At 6pm

Simone Weil amphitheatre
5, allée Jacques Berque,
Nantes

By

Salah Trabelsi

Assistant Professor in Medieval history
of Arab countries at Lyon 2 University

Following the invitation of **Ibrahima
Thioub**, Associate Fellow of IAS-Nantes

Salah Trabelsi is assistant-director of the mediterranean and middle-east studies research group at the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée in Lyon. He is assistant professor in mediaval history of Arab countries at University Lyon 2 and vice president of the Scientific committee of « la route de l'Esclave » (the path of the Slave), a Unesco international project.

He has recently supervised publications such as « Resistances et mémoires des esclavages. Espaces arabo-musulmans et transatlantiques » (with Olivier Leservoisier, Karthala, 2014) as well as *Esclavages en Méditerranée. Espaces et dynamiques économiques* (with Fabienne P. Guillén. Collection de la Casa de Velázquez, 2012).

Following the invitation from Ibrahima Thioub, Associate Fellow, Salah Trabelsi will be at the Institute for a workshop for the preparation of three textbooks on Slavery and Slave trade history. This project which gathers historians under the direction of Ibrahima, has been funded with the support of Nantes town council.

Theme

Building on selected examples in Maghreb and the Middle East Salah Trabelsi's conference will address the issues of slave trade and slavery legacy. The extremely long description of emancipation and abolition processes, started decades ago, will help to identify a differentiated approach of the realities inherent to people from slavery. One of the striking features of these countries' modern history is the persistence of some established forms of enslavement in some regions, between the Red Sea and the Atlantic Ocean forms. This particular story partly explains the late and contrasting emergence of the issue of memory in the descendants of slaves.

Other factors - related to the diversity of aspects of slavery in the Mediterranean world, and controversies related to concepts of emancipation and freedom - make the understanding of the phenomenon difficult. The general impression is that of a deficiency in the implementation of exploratory contextualized approaches; because symptomatically, the history of slaves is still being defensive and simplistic discourse when it is not simply eluded or ignored.

What is the situation today, three years after the wake of the Arab spring? How can one assess the birth of a diasporic consciousness and new forms of action taken by young people, descendants of slaves by and large? How these new dynamics reflect mobilizations yet discreet but heralding new cultural, political and social configurations? Finally what predictions can we apply for the future of African descent diasporas in this part of the world, even if the formula seems inappropriate, regarding black minorities immersed in naturally African countries?